Hindu Iconography

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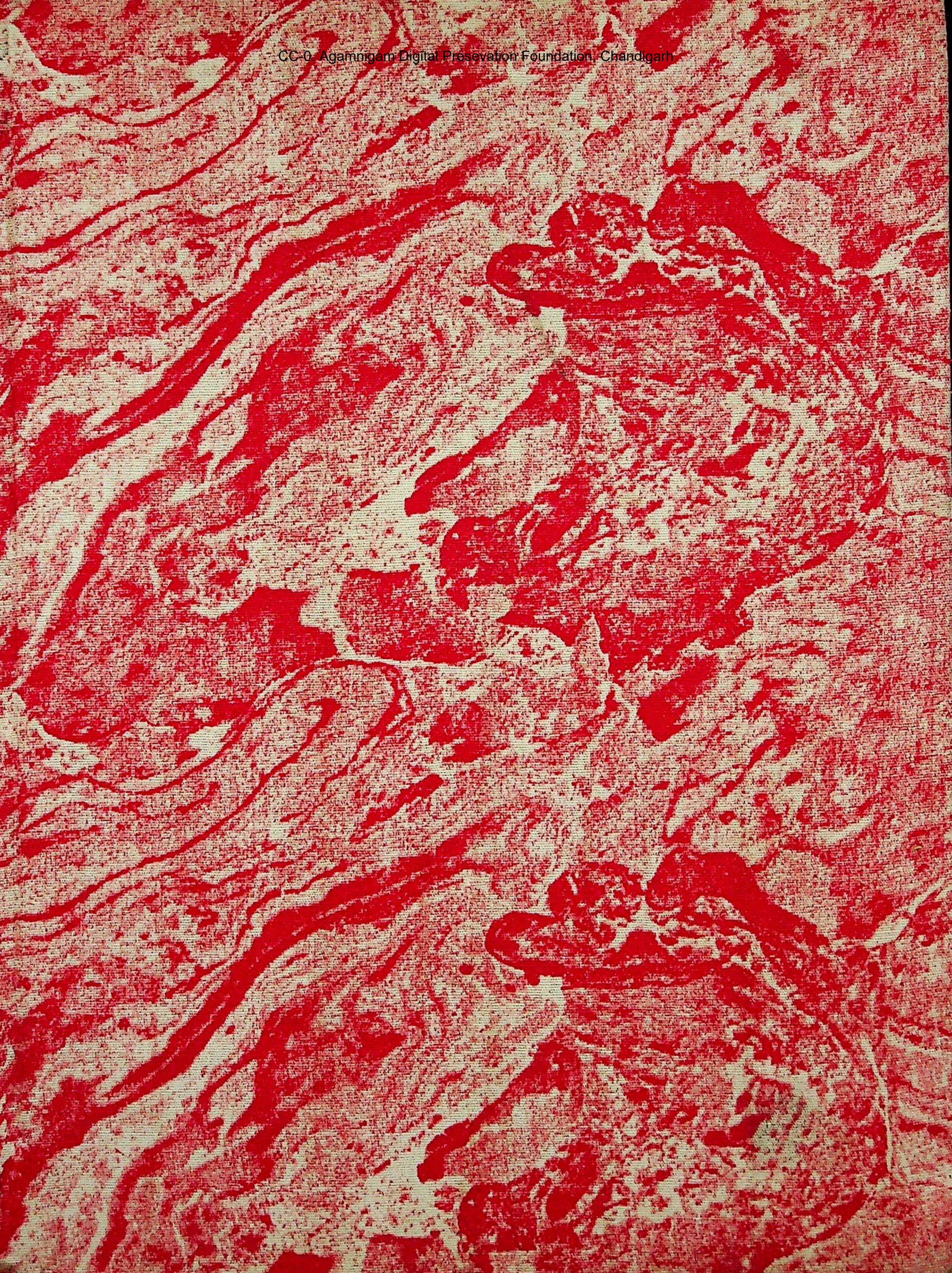
S.P. Tewari



HINDU ICONOGRAPHY

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(Based on Anthological Verses, Literature, Art and Epigraphs)

by

S. P. TEWARI

AGAM KALA PRAKASHAN
NEW DELHI

First Published 1979
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4911

State Museum Library
Lucknow

Published by Agam Prasad, M.A., Research Scholar,
for AGAM KALA PRAKASHAN, 1736 Tri Nagar,
New Delhi-110035, Phone-563395
Printed by PRINT INDIA, A-38/2, Maya Puri Industrial Area, Phase-I,
New Delhi-110064.

Dedicated
to the sacred memory
of my father
Late Sri R. P. Tewari

PREFACE

Iconography of the Hindu gods and goddesses as being studied now is based on an age-old pattern. For about a century the same old pattern of identifying images with the help of some certain marks and attributes narrated in the lines of Silpa-texts is invariably being followed. It was absolutely necessary at a time and is still useful. There is no doubt about it. But for making the iconographic studies more comprehensive and lively than these are, it is necessary to look at the icons from various angles. What is more needed in this respect is the application of various literary and epigraphical records which have rarely been dealt, putting face to face with iconography. For example many times, the epigraphical passages specially the invocatory verses, enlighten the student of iconography more than so many heavily strained, pedantic and finicky descriptions of the śilpa-śastras. The reason is that the said verses from the epigraphs of literary compositions while giving a minimum possible description of the image, speak more on its beauty and aesthetic appeal. They characterise a charm born of natural and spontaneous description which is often very suggestive and unconciously point out the most noteworthy features of iconographic representations. In otherwords, whereas the śilpa texts very conciously encumerate each and every minute detail of an image (and thereby make it more factual but heavy) the verses from literary texts and epigraphs illuminate the same truth from a different angle which is found more lively, suggestive and full of devotion as well. In fact like śilpācāryas, the poets of these verses had not to bother about the acute details of the image formation as it was already before them to see and visualise (if in any case it was not there, they conceived the idea at least form different mythical resources) the beauty, the form and the gracious identity of the icon in person. This is why, these unconciously made remarks of the poets of the epigraphical verses serve a two fold purpose, one is when they suggest (or point out) the form of the deity and other is when they appreciate it with the eyes of a poet and heart of a bhakta. We propose here to look into the icons of Śiva and Visṇu with this angle of literature and epigraphs.

Here, a word about the poets of the inscriptions may not be out of place who acted as court poets, pandits and priests and in many cases held even bigger and more responsible offices of the state. We know from the bulk of the inscriptions published so far that these poets-who composed the praśastis were highly qualified persons, particularly in the field of linguistics, literature and mythology. They enjoyed an equal command over the sciences of śilpa, sthāpatya, chitrakalā and many others. It's no wonder that much before the site for a temple was selected and a deity was installed therein, they were duly consulted. It's a pity that these connosieurs of the time have not been duly rewarded with the share of the credit, they deserve, in the formation of iconography and the hearty appreciation of the icon by the present day art-historians and the students of iconography. An humble effort is made here to sort out the invocatory verses from sanskrit epigraphs and to see how far they reflect on the identity, the beauty and the magnanimity of the icon.

As regards the inclusion of the verses from literature as mentioned above, it is mainly from the anthologies of the court poetry. There are evidences, that some of the court poets who were responsible for the compositions of the royal praśastis, were also well known otherwise and their poems have been included in the authologies of sanskrit poetry. Even otherwise, considering the similarity of the verses from praśastis and that from anthologies of the court-poets, on the merits of language, style and fancy, one finds them much-closer to each other. The only difficulty is to which we have to regret, that in many cases the date, time or even locality of the poets from anthologies are not very well ascertained. But, minus this point, these verses are equally rich in suggesting many of the iconographical details which have been our main criterion after selecting them for the purpose.

In course of our discussion with each and every icon of Siva and Visṇu we have tried to summarise the basic features of its iconography on one hand and then to see how far these features are reflected in the benedictory verses from literature and epigraphs. Needless to say that art illustrations have equally been kept in mind. The plates at the end of the monograph are provided to give an elementary help to the reader in having accordance to our views. However, this whole sentence as (Hindu Iconography) based on Anthological verses, Literature, Art and Epigraphs being too long for a title to appear on each and every folio has been omitted for practical reasons. It is hoped that the present title of the folios will not lead to any confusion to the readers.

The first and second chapter of the book aim at giving a more generalised information about the long tradition of benedictory words, phrases and verses and their utility in the field of iconography. Other chapters are fully devoted to the iconography of Siva and Visnu. The last chapter is based on the verses revealing wonderful ideas about the forms and attributes of Siva and Visṇu, mainly collected from Sanskrit authologies. These verses, in short have three specific characteristics. One is that they are full of lingual charms, other is that they talk about the intricacies of Hindu mythology in a more lively and light hearted manner. Their third feature is that they yield a running commentary on so many iconographic poses of the two gods. Overall, they run very much parallel with the track of invocatory verses from epigraphs.

Regarding the freshness of the work it may be safely said that except an article of a savant like Mr. Sivaramamurti, on the theme (entitled as Iconographic gleanings from Epigraphy) which has appeared twice (first in the proceedings of Oriental conference, 1946 iii, 33, Nagpur, and second in the Arts Asiatiques, Vol. IV, 1957 with illustrations) nothing otherwise has been done so far. With all the debt of gratitude I owe to the said authority and his article, in my own humble way I would like to say that the said paper speaks more in the language of a pioneer, having little regard to the sequence of the things. Nevertheless it shows a way and a way full of interesting materials.

Before presenting the work which is intended more to be in the hands of students than scholars, I may fail my duties if I do not acknowledge the gratitude I owe to all who deserve.

In the first place I am to remember my late father to whose sacred memory this bunch of mangala-slokas is dedicated. For the inspiration, encouragement and guidance in the field of sanskrit literature in general and epigraphy in particular I will ever remain grateful to Mr. C. Sivaramamurti. My elder brother Sri K.P. Tewari deserves the same gratitude. From the department of Archaeological Survey of India, my grateful thanks are due to Mr. M.N. Deshpande, Director General, Mr. B.K. Thapar, Joint Director General, Mrs. D. Mitra, and Mr. M.C. Joshi. Amongst the senior collegues from National Museum, New Delhi, I express my thanks to Dr. V.P. Dwivedi, Dr. G.N. Pant, Dr. B.N. Sharma, Dr. S.P. Gupta, Dr. C. Bhattacharya, Mrs. K. Lal, Mrs. Nilima Roy and others. Mr. Mohan Lal of the same institute deserves a special thank for his kind help. I am particularly beholden to Dr. K.V. Ramesh, Superintending Epigraphist, Mysore for his scholarly suggestions and guidance. It will be an omission on my part if I fail to remember the help I received from the friends in Amsterdam (Netherlands). In the first place I acknowledge the all possible help received from Mrs. Nelly Geerts who has also very kindly typed the manuscript. To Mrs. Marion Bruÿn I am thankful for her going through the manuscript. My special thanks are due to the members of the commissie voor Financering Academische work aan de Universetait van Amsterdam. I owe a great deal of thanks to Miss Nandana Chuttiwongs and Mr. J.M.M. Ubaghs of the Institute of South East Asian Archaeology University of Amsterdam. To Prof. J. Nadou of the University of Lille (France) I am beholden for his encouragement. Amongst many other friends from Amsterdam I remember with pleasure the help I received from Frans Evers, Dion Den-Nieuenwoer, Marcel van

Tilborg, Ton Quax, Theo van alst, Philip van der Meer and Rosa Maria.

For the photographs produced here I am grateful to the Director General, Archaeological Survey of India. I must also remember the help of Mr. R.K. Pande, C.M. Srivastava and Sri Bhagawat Sahi of the Central Library of the Archaeological Survey of India. Mr. Agam Prasad of Agam Kala Prakashan and all his collegues deserves thanks without whose endeavour the work would have not seen the light of the day.

S. P. Tewari

Mysore
28th July 1978

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Iconography deals with the icons and icons were made with the basic aim of being worshipped. Worship is an outcome of devotional sentiment. It is this sentiment which is termed as Bhakti in Indian languages. A real devotion is a submission to the Lord before whose icon a devotee concentrates himself. During the course of his devotion he appeals (praises or begs) the Lord in so many ways, in so many words and these words form the body of a prayer. In the simple humility of his prayers he forgets the man-made boundaries of caste, creed and blood. He prays for the welfare of one and everyone. This is why the compositions of this sort are classified as Āśirvacanas, Namaskāras, Prarthanā ślokas or Mangala śloka and so and so forth. They ensure the eternity and auspiciousness of the thing which is done or undertaken to be done after their recitations. This belief in mangala (welfare and auspiciousness) through the wording of prayers has yielded so many verses. Where besides Āśirvacana or Namaskara, there are found so many subsidiary facts about the icons. The curious fact is that they all originate from the basic concept of auspiciousness combined with an idea of personal and universal welfare.

Basic concept of auspiciousness is as old as the history of man himself. If the meaning of the symbols like *swastika* and others is taken in the same sense as we take it now, some of the pre-historic paintings having those symbols, may be taken as a good example to trace out the antiquity of auspicious or inauspiciousness. As we are more directly concerned with historic period and there too more with the period our literary records came into shape, we are not going to deal with the prehistoric records for our purpose at the moment.

Vedic literature being the earliest record as literature in India, is a self-proved store of all our customs, beliefs, religions, practices and so many rituals and traditions etc. In an orthodox belief all the Vedic hymns are considered to be a sort of prayer and therefore quite auspicious in their nature. The basic features, elements or germs of the later age benedictory verses are all available there. It is possible, that on this very lineage developed the custom of beginning any work with the prayer to the gods or goddesses of one's own choice. As a matter of fact the production of hymns of praise to the gods naturally did not cease with the Vedic poets[1]—but was more keenly followed by the authors or poets of the later periods.

At a later date, we see that there is practically no work literary, scientific, philosophical or whatsoever which has a beginning without using *Mangalaśloka* or *mangalavacana*. This invocation of the divine, in the form of mangalaślokas, as we shall see later on, was made to ensure the success of the undertaking. *Pāṇini* as one of the greatest as well as earliest author of classical Sanskrit literature has also commenced his work *Aṣṭādhyāyī* (a well-known treatise on Sanskrit grammar) with a similar invocation indicated in his use of the word *Vriddhi* at it's beginning. The first *sūtra* of his text called *Vriddhir-ādaic*[2] as a matter of language should have been like *adaic-vriddhih* and not *Vriddhir-ādaic*, which is the case. According to *Patanjali*, the writer of *Mahābhāṣya*, it was done with purpose and the purpose as he says, was to follow the practice of *Mangala*.

The word *Vriddhi* as explains *Patanjali*, was used to ensure the growth of the work and the longevity of it's readers.[3] Addressing *Pāṇini* as *māngalika-ācāryra* he takes recourse to the same practice of *mangala* to justify the use of *vakāra* in a *sūtra* called *Bhūvādayo-dhātavah*.[4] In short, the practice of beginning a work (*śāstra*) with an auspicious invocation, following it in the middle, and concluding it again with the *mangala* (*mangalādīni mangala madhyāni mangalāntāni*

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1. Keith, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, 210.
2. Astadhyayi, I. 1.1.
3. Mahabhasya, I. 40.
4. *Ibid.*, I: 3, 1.

hi śāstrāṇi prathyante) as told by Patanjali, hold good to the whole structure of Aṣṭādhyāyī. As example the sūtra '*siva-saṁ ariṣtasya kare*' in the middle along with *tasmaihitam* (good be to all concerned) and *udaya* in the end of the work can be seen. According to scholars, the use of *udaya* in place of even a shorter term like *para* again, points to the Panini's keen faith in *māngalika* practices.[1] He took this word from the *Rik Prātiśākhya* (II, 32) where '*udaya*' is used as a synonym of *para*. (See *rikāra udaye* etc.) The doubt raised by few scholars (like: Sköld in his papers on Panini, p. 8) that 'udaya' is a later interpolation, seems untenable in the light of further *vārtikas* by Kātyāyana and comments (*Bhāṣya*) of Patanjali on it. Both of them conclude their observations as *Bhagavatah Pāṇineh siddham*.[2]

Following the same practice, *Kātyāyana*, the next successor to Panini—who wrote *vārtikas* on his *sūtras*—also commenced his treatise with an auspicious word *siddhaṁ* (see: *Siddhe śabdartha sambandhe*). Patanjali, the commentator on Panini and Katyayana both, has dealt the meaning and usage of the word *siddham* in a pretty detail. Keeping in mind, the frequent use of this word in contemporary and later epigraphs, it would be within the perview of this paper to look into the meaning of *Siddham* as suggested by Patanjali. According to him, the word *siddham* is a synonym of *nitya*--which is used in reference to objects that are unchangeable and immovable, as for instance the heaven is *siddha*, the earth is *siddha*, the sky is *siddha*.[3] Otherwise, in his opinion 'we are to understand here that the previous member (*pūrva-pada*) of the compound has been dropped; thus, *siddhah* stands for *atyantasiddhah*, absolutely eternal.[4] Here, one may ask if the word *siddham* stands for *nityam*, why not *nityam* itself has been uttered by the author to make the doubt clear ?[5] Patanjali's answer to this querry is that it is only for the sake of auspiciousness that the *ācārya* bent on securing mangala (*i.e.*, auspiciousness) uses the word *siddham* at the beginning for the well-being of the great collection of śāstra.

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[1] *Kasika*, VIII, 4, 67 Udātta parasyeti vaktavya Udaya grahanam mangalārtham.

[2] V.S. Agrawala, *India as known to Panini*, pp. 310-11.

[3] *Mahābhāsya*: *Pespaśā*: *Nitya paryāyavāci siddha śabdah : yat Kūṭasthesvavicāliṣu bhāvesu vartate; tadyathā siddha dyauh siddha priṭhvī siddhamākāśamiti.*

[4] Ibid, *Athavā pūrva-pada lopoatradraṣtavyah atyanta siddhah-siddhamiti.*

[5] Ibid, *Kiṁ punaranena varnyena? Kim na mahatā kaṁthena nitya śabda evopāttah, yasminnupadīyamāne asaṁdehah syāt.*

Because the works which have auspicious words at the beginning spread far and wide and the people connected with them become heroes and live long and the readers have their desires fulfilled.[1]

As per the later date classifications, *mangalas* may be of three kinds. One is *Āśih* or benediction, other is *namaskriyā* or salutation to the deity and third is *vastunirdeśa* or suggestion of mangala while abruptly beginning the topic.

This arrangement has been followed in all written documents as well as inscriptions on stone, metal plates and other materials.

Coming directly to the field of Indian epigraphs we notice that Asokan edicts have not used any sign or a word referring to or related with mangala, except few suggestions in the form of *Devanampiya*[2] etc.; which may indirectly be interpreted as a third type (vastunirdesa) of mangala.[3] But after Asokan inscriptions we come across so many early records where *mangalika* words like *siddham*[4], *om siddham*[5], *Bhagavata*, *swasti sri*, *swasti*, *srimaṭam* etc., are very frequently used.

Though some of the symbols like that for *swasti* or *om* remained in use along with the short words for *mangala* like *siddham* and *jitam* etc., for a long time, gradually the invocations became more and more elaborate and ran from mere symbols and few short words to

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1. Ibid, *Mangalārtham* : *Māngalika ācāryo mahat śāstraughesya managlārtham siddha śabdamāditah prathyante vīra purusāni ca bhavautayāusmat purusānica, adhyetāraśca.*
2. See : Asokan edicts.
3. Sivaramamurti, *Indian Epigraphy and South Indian Scripts*, p. 25.
4. For further references to the use of the word Siddham in early records, see: Ind. Ant. Vol. X, p. 273; C.I.I. Vol. III, p. 25, fn. 4; Arch. Survey India, Vol. V, Pl. XLI H; Ind. Ant. Vol. V, p. 346 and Indian Epigraphy, Sircar, (D.C.), Delhi, 1965 (Preamble) fn. 6; Chhabra, (B.C.), Diplomatic of Sanskrit copper plate grants. Indian Archives, Vol. V, 1951, p. 1, ff. etc.
5. For different views on *om siddham* and *swasti*, see: Sircar, (D.C.), Proceedings of Indian Historical congress 1939, pp. 471, ff.

more or less big sections in prose and verse in praise of the favourite deities of the grantors or writers of the documents.[1] These verses composed particularly in praise of the favourite deities of the composers from the central theme of this paper here. The mute point of these verses, in short, is, that often they contain details which directly or indirectly help in iconographic studies.

In this short collection of verses, we are presently going to deal with; our study is more or less confined to the main deities like Siva and Vishnu. As majority of the verses found from the various records are about Siva and his multi-farious forms, as a start, we prefer to begin first with the verses on Siva and his iconographic forms. Later on we will discuss the verses about Visnu and his various incarnations.

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[1] Sircar, (D.C.), *Indian Epigraphy*, p. 127.

CHAPTER II

ICONOGRAPHIC CLEANINGS FROM BENEDICTORY VERSES

As we have seen before benedictory verses invocating gods and goddesses of one's own choice were invariably used at the beginning of every kind of work. Royal charters, inscriptions, records or prasastis are no exception to that. Therefore, as a rule we find many *mangalislokas* used at the opening of almost each and every Sanskrit inscription. This trend is not so noticable in the inscriptions of pre-Gupta period, where only a few symbols and short words like Om or Siddham are used, but from Gupta period onward, we start getting interesting verses composed in good classical Sanskrit, praising various gods and goddesses. So far, these *slokas* have been read, marked or studied only as a part and parcel of the main epigraph. Their basic importance as *piece leaving* reflections on the religious faiths and beliefs of the time has hardly been revalued. Very often we see that many of these verses are found left untranslated without any remark in the old (and new as well) issues of the periodicals like Epigraphia Indica. Even when they are translated along with the main body of the inscription very little (and that, too, only in rare cases) is said about the main contents of their text. Possible reasons for neglecting these verses may be that they are composed in somewhat difficult language, or that they form a typical category in themselves and hardly yield any information about political history which was somehow more important to the readers and editors of these records at an early stage. In any case, they were never taken seriously as an independent source of religious history, or to say it more precisely—as a source of information for gleaning facts about iconography, a very popular branch of religious history, dealing with the sculptures, mythology and thought in one. Therefore, it is proposed here to deal with the iconographic gleanings from the above said benedictory verses.

After a careful survey of these verses right from Gupta period till the end of Hindu period of Indian history we find that the majority of these kind of slokas are devoted to the invocation either god Siva or Visnu. As we know from the iconographic studies of these gods, they have various forms, poses and attributes; hence the names and epithets, these elements are very frequently met with in the text of these verses as well. Talking about Siva and his various forms, names and epithets, from the inscriptions of the Gupta period onward we get a lot of information which is useful in the proper understanding of his iconography in detail

One of the early references to the name of Siva occurs, on the coin legends of Wima Kadaphises.[1] In the simple composition of the legend Siva is praised as *Sarva-lokaisvara* and *Mahesvara*. It is difficult to say how many of the iconographic elements of Siva as *Mahesa* or Mahesvara were developed during the early stage of the Kusana-period, but there is no doubt that these names (with some other synonyms as well) were quite well-known.

A Gupta period pillar inscription from Mathura from the reign of King Chandra Gupta II (G.E. 61, A.D. 380)[2] one's a good information. Here, Siva is addressed as *jayati Bhagavandaṇḍah Rudradaṇḍogranayako nityam.*[3] *Bhagavandaṇdah* and *Rudradandah* are the terms which speak very clearly about the *Lakulīśa* form of Siva, where he is shown bearing a daṇḍa (stick) in his hands. In the field of plastic representations these forms are very often noticed.

In the same way a stone *linga* inscription during the reign of Kumara Gupta I (G.E. 117, A.D. 436) from Karamdanda (Faizabad Distt., U.P.) adopts a salutory (*namaskriya*) type of invocation to the

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1. Sircar, (D.C.) *Select Inscriptions*, p. 129, No. 31.
2. *Ibid*, p. 277, 78, 79.
3. *Ibid*, p. 279.

god *praising* him as *Mahadeva*.[1] In another inscription of the time of Kumara Gupta I and Bandhuvarman,[2] Siva's hairlocks (*jata*) and the spotless moon on his head, are nicely praised in an asirvada style. Now those who are familiar with Siva's iconograhic forms may very easily see the point knowing how important the attributes like *jata* (particularly, when he is shown as *Gangādhara*) and the moon are in the plastic representations of the god (cf. the name *Chandra Sekhara*).

Likewise from the stone inscription of King Isanavarman (A.D. 553)[3] from the place called Haraha we find references to several different forms of Siva, such as; *ardhanāriśvara*, *Tripurāntaka* and *Andhakāntaka* which clearly shows that during this period certain iconographic forms which were not popularly known to the sculptors were well praised and appreciated by the composers of grants.

As we shall give a detailed analysis of Siva and his popular iconographic forms, in the following chapter, at this point, we will discuss the matter briefly as, focusing the points directly relevant for iconographic gleanings from benedictory verses in general.

Various names and epithets of Siva, otherwise reflecting upon his iconographic manifestations from the vast field of Sanskrit inscriptions may be summarised as follows :

1. *Pinaki*. Siva known as *Pinaki* because of the name of the bow he bears in his hands which is very prominently used in the Mandasor stone inscription from the time of Yasodharman (532 A.D.).[4]
2. *Bhavasrja*. This is the name used for Siva in the above said inscription where his snakes are praised.[5]

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[1] Sircar, (D.C.) *Select Inscriptions*, p. 289.
see: Namo Mahādevāya.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 307.
see: Amalina śaśilekhā danturam-pimgalānām.
Parivahati samūham yāvadīśojatānām.

[3] Epi. Indica Vol. XIV, pp. 115 ff.

[4] Fleet, C.I.I. Vol. III, pp. 152 ff.

[5] *Ibid*, pp. 152 सृजतु भवसृजो वः क्लेश भंङ्गं भुजंगः ।

3. *Draghistah* is the name used for Siva in another inscription from Mandasor,[1] where the mighty valour of his mount Nandi is praised. In the same inscription Siva is also called as *Sulapani*.[2]

4. *Sarva*, a very popular and common name of Siva in the field of literature from later date is used more than once in the inscription.[3]

Likewise some lesser known names as *Sthanu*, *Jatabhara-mandana*[4] and *Vyomakesa*[5] are also found appropriately used in the inscription. Names like *Smrarati* are also very commonly used in the benedictory verses. Before closing this topic, a word of clearification or may be apology is necessary concerning the survey of the names of Siva from the vast field of inscription. It should be clearly stated that almost *all* the names given to him either by way of iconographic manifestations, or though the devotional mythical prayers or stotras, are somehow or other found in the benedictory verses from inscriptions. The terms cited above are only to give some bared examples from the entire nomenclature and nothing more. They can not even be called the most popular representative ones. It is obvious that these few names are given in order to point out certain details such as the *vastunirdesa*. However they are not intended to be seen as an exhaustive list.

Like Siva, the iconography of Vishnu is gleaned equally well from the field of Sanskrit epigraphs. Various names and epithets of Vishnu which from the base of his iconographic manifestations later on, are very often described, praised and euologised through the charming compositions of many Sanskrit verses. Not only the names but also in many places, the events of his different incarnations as

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1. Fleet, C.I.I. Vol. III, p. 149.
2. *Ibid*, p. 149 द्राघिष्ठ. शूल पाणेः क्षपयतु भवतां शत्रु ते जांसि केतुः ।
3. *Ibid* , pp. 162 ff.
4. Epi. Indica, Vol. VIII, pp. 31 ff.
5. *Ibid*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 322-24.

narrated from puranas and other mythological sources are very elaborately described or hinted upon.

Visnu as the most powerful victorious one, has a name, Vikrama, the antiquity of which goes back to the period of the Vedic texts. According to the later date mythological stories, he got this name after he measured the whole universe within three steps and enslaved the demon king Bali. The popular version of the story is found in various *purana*s like *Visnu-purana*, *Vamana purana* and *Bhagavat-purana*. After this incident manifestations in the field of iconography known as Trivikrama-Visnu or Vāmana-Visnu appeared. The same story forms a theme of one of the famous inscriptions from the time of King Skanda Gupta[1] directly hinting at the story and the iconographic incarnations of Visnu. In another Gupta inscription of the same period Visnu has been praised as *Vibhu*, *Caturbhuja* and *Garudaketuh*[2] which are well established terms from the field of iconography also. The inscription praises Visnu, who has Garuda as his banner and whose couch is the broad water of the four oceans. From iconographic representations we know for certain that his form should be of *Ananta-śayana* Visnu. He appears also in the form of *Varāha* which is eloquently praised in the inscription from Erana (M.P.).[3] The same theme is repeated in the copperplate inscription from Kamauli[4] where a salutation is made to him under the name of *Vāsudeva* also. A lovely pose of Visnu shown along with his consort Laksmi forms the subject of the Chittagong[5] copperplate of Dāmodara. Here, the composor of the verses has elegantly utilised the name of Visnu as Dāmodara, which is also the name of the grantor of the plate. Visnu, the Hari, is famous for his attribute of a garland known as Vanamālā which is humorously described in the inscription of Bhattadeva[6] from Bhuwaneswara. It also refers to the well-known

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1. Fleet, C.I.I., Vol. III, p. 58 ff.
2. *Ibid*, pp. 88-90.
3. *Ibid*, pp. 159-60.
4. *Ibid*, pp. 114 ff.
5. *Ibid*, *Inscriptions of Bengal*, (ed. Majumdar N.G.) p. 158 ff.
6. *Ibid*, pp. 32-33.

fact in Visnu's iconography that he has two consorts, one being *Laksmī* and the other *Saraswatī*.

Besides these few examples from epigraphy, there are also inscriptions with benedictory verses in which all the ten well-known incarnations of Visnu are praised. In our chapter on Visnu and his popular iconographic forms as witnessed through the verses from literature and epigraphs we will have occasion to have a closer look into many other features and details.

To sum up the discussion on iconographic gleanings from benedictory verses, we can say that the information from these verses is more extensive than the information found in other sources such as the Dhyānaślokas. One of the basic differences between the style of the Dhyāna verses and that of the verses from inscriptions is their unconventional character which makes the description more lively, lucid and elaborate. In fact the excerpts from the inscriptions are a sort of poetry in which all possible virtues (*guṇa*) and sentiments (*rasa*) are combined. They never should like the stereotyped Dhyāna verses, which are more intent upon counting the arms, heads and attributes of the icon. If the Dhyana verses are a sort of standard in the field of iconography or a key which has only those distinguishing marks (and no more) which are absolutely necessary to open the lock (in case of icons to clear the mystery of their identification) of bolted room of the icon, then the benedictory verses are a kind of freestyled appreciation well within the bounds of the iconographic domain.

CHAPTER III

SIVA AND HIS POPULAR ICONOGRAPHIC FORMS AS REVEALED IN THE VERSES FROM EPIGRAPHIC RECORDS

In the field of visual arts, as seen in the cellars of temples or even sometimes on the outerside of temple-carvings, otherwise found and collected in so many art-galleries, museums and collections, we come across many images of god Siva, where his various popular poses are nicely executed and magnificently emphasised. Unlike Visnu, the other popular deity from Hinduism, Siva has no incarnations. This is why in most of his forms some of the basic attributes remain the same and do not change radically as in case of Visnu. Therefore, the names of his various forms do not depend on different mythological stories, explaining the different incarnations, but on the basis of different contexts. That is to say : Siva with his one and the same personality, because of the context in which some certain pose or a deed is prominent, gets a different name. For instants, Siva with the cresent of the moon in his hair on one side and the stream of the water from the river Ganges on the other side, holding a trident and standing beside Nandi (his mount) might be called Gangādhara. The only thing which will be prominent in this particular from, is the depiction of Gangā, sometimes in her watery form and sometimes in an anthropomorphic form as a beautiful lady. In other cases Siva standing with Parvati on his side along with Kārtikeya may be named *Soma-Skanda* but with a little alteration; he may, in the same pose as he stands holding the hand of Parvati, with Brahma seated in the middle as a priest be called Kalyana-sundara-Siva. So much for the difference between the incarnation forms of Visnu and the usual forms of Siva as seen, named and defined in the field of popular iconography.

All the forms of Siva (for the purpose of study) are generally classified into two major forms which reveal more about his moods. One is the Saumya or māngalika-form where he is shown in a more peaceful, loving and polite mood; the other is Ugra-form, where he is shown either killing or attacking a demon in his more aggressive and violent mood. Here, for the sake of study, one more pose may be taken into account—where he is shown in composite forms like those of Ardhanarisvara and Hari-hara.

Referring back to the field of inscription we get almost all the popular forms of Siva, representing all the three categories. In the following pages we will discuss them one by one.

1. *Saumya-rūpa-Śiva.* The most popular forms of Siva from this group, as they are discussed in the *āgamas* and various *śilpa-śāstras* are of *Gangādhara*, *Chandra Shekhara*, *Umā Maheśvara*, *Kalyāna Sundra*, *Soma Skanda* and *Ravanānugraha*, *etc.* They are all referred within the content of benedictory verses, though their arrangement is not very regular since sometimes two or three forms or even more are mentioned in a single *sloka* while at other times one singular form occupies the theme of a whole verse. One possible reason for this irregularity may be that where some of the forms, like Chandra Shekhara, may be hinted, or grasped at with only the mere mention of *Chandra* or *Śaśānka* etc. Other forms such as Natarāja or Ravanānugrah are less obvious and require more words and lines to be made clear. Now we shall deal with each and every form of this group seperately and see how many and what kind of benedictory verses are found which directly or indirectly provide facts about the iconography of these forms.

Gangādhara. As partly explained above, one who holds Gangā on his head, is a Gangādhara. The popular story about Siva holding Gangā on his head is met with in the Puranas (the Siva-Purana among others). In short, the story is that Ganga, which was previously flowing over the sky[1] and not on earth, was persuaded through the severe penances of King Bhagīratha to come down to earth. Now, once she agreed to the proposal, the problem was how to control the enormously forceful stream of the water, so that it may not go straight to the another world but rather to retain it on earth. King Bhgīratha, puzzeled with this problem, was advised to present Lord Siva Ravanānugrah who, after some prayers and persuasions, kindly agreed to take on the task. Ganga, hearing that Siva was going to take all the water of her stream on his head, felt endangered. In defense she thought of becoming more wildly forceful with her stream, in order to wipe out Siva as well. So, to cut the long story short, finally she descended from heaven to earth but long before she could touch the earth, she was taken over by Siva in his great hairlocks. She was later on released in shape of three drops, which gave her a name as *tripathagā*, a river flowing in three different streams. This whole episode of Ganga's descendence on earth in the field of literature and also in common belief is known as *Gangāvataraṇa* which is very skillfully utilised in an inscription of the time of Samudra Gupta[2] from Allahabad (U.P.). Relevant lines of the inscription say that 'Gangā purifies all the three worlds as she flows quickly after being liberated from confinement in the thickets of the matted hair of the god Paśupati'.[3] The statement which is of *vastu-nirdeśa* type, used in a *mangalānta* form, is important being one of the earliest references about river Gangā from inscriptions. Moreover, it not only refers the name of Gangā but the whole *paurānic* episode along with her links with Siva. Interestingly enough, from this period onward, we start getting also the images of Siva where the river goddess Ganga is particularly shown.

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1. Remarkable are the names of Gangā we gather from various inscriptions. For instance her names like
   Nākāpagā, (E.I. Vol. II, pp. 7-17)
   Swardhunī, (E.I. Vol. II, pp. 117-30)
   Swarga-tarangiṇī (Govindpur copper plate of Laksmana-Sena) and
   Nilimpa-Nirjhari etc. may be seen.
2. Fleet, C.I.I. Vol. III, p. 6 ff.
3. *Ibid*, p. 9.

The popular modes of depicting Ganga on the hairlocks of Siva are of two types.[1] One is that where she is shown in the form of a stream of water and the otherone is where she is shown in her personified form. Composers of the grants or *praśatis* took special interest in speaking about Gangā in her both the forms. Besides, there are also some very good verses (though late) found in the pages of Sanskrit anthologies, where Ganga is described as a co-wife to Siva.

Other interpretation of the existence of Gangā, with the ever controversial personality of Siva, in a more philosophic manner, is taken as marking the presence of the watery aspect, against the fiery aspect which is believed to remain in his third eye. Ganga's birth, decendance from heaven (avataraṇa) and her close affinity to Siva, has received an overwhelming popularity amongst poets, sculptors and painters alike. Some beautiful scenes where Ganga is shown in her personified form from the Elephant a cave panels and many other places may be seen. Likewise the birth of Gangā has also inspired the painters from the Himalayan region.

Some selected verses from inscriptions, where Gangā is very prominently described as adorning the personality Siva, may be seen as follows:

1. किं मालाः कुमुदस्य किं शशिकलाः
किन्धर्मकर्माकुराः ।

किंवा कंचुकि कंचुकाः किमथवा
भूत्युद्गमा भान्त्यमी ।

इत्थन्नाकि वितर्किताः शिव शिरः
संचारि नाकापगा ।

रिङ्गद्वल्गु तरंग भंगित तयः
पुण्य प्रवा पान्तु वः ॥

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[1] For details about the iconography of Śiva as Gangādhara, see : Rao, Gopinath, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Vol. II and Banerji, (J.N.), *Development of Hindu iconography*.

May those founts of holiness, the lines of the creeping and leaping tortuous waves of the river of heaven meandering on Siva's head guard you—the waves about which the celestials are doubting whether they can be: (i) lotus garlands or lunar digits, (ii) or sprouts of righteous deeds, (iii) or serpent's skins, (iv) or the God's majesty bursting into view, (v) or they are a place of origin to all the *Bhutis*.[1]

The poet's supposition put in a form of *Utprekṣā* here, is remarkable in the sense that the form of Gangā he has thought or seen (or for that matter, his celestials have observed) was not a personified one but in a steam of water form. Some of the suppositions, like that of lotus garlands or moon digits may be nearer to the actual depiction of stream, as observed in the field of visual arts:

2. ॐ नमः शिवाय

क्रौंचारि द्विरदास्ययोः शिशुतया
तातस्य मौलौ मिथो ।

गंगा वारिणि खेलतोः शशिकला
मालोक्य मध्वेजटम् ।।

शैवालावलि मध्य वद्ध शफरी
बुद्ध्वा समाकर्षतो ।

राक्रन्दस्फुट कन्दलेन विहसन्
व्याज्जगद् धूर्जटिः ।।

Om adoration to Siva.[2]

May Dhūrjati[3] Siva protect the world, laughing at the squable between Kartikeya (the Krauñcāri) and Ganeśa (Dwiradāsyah) while sporting together in the water of the Ganges on Siva's forehead and mistaking the moon as a *śafarī* fish entrapped in a mass of weeds.

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1. E.I. Vol. II, pp. 7-17, verse 2.
2. Barrackpur copper plate inscription of Vijayasena, Inscriptions of Bengal, Vol. III, p. 61.
3. Dhurjatī is the name of Śiva which means one who has a smoke-colour.

The statement of the inscription as *Gangā vāriṇi Khelatah* etc., suggests the form of Siva as Gangādhara where Gangā is again supposed to be shown in her stream form. The idea is more figuratively repeated in many of the later-date *stotras* on Siva. For example the lines of the famous *Siva-Tandavastotram* begin as *Jaṭāṭavī galajjalapravāha pāvitasthāle*' etc.

Another important feature of the verse is it's unconventional liberality in the type of religious prayers which makes it very different in style and nature from that of simple Dhyāna ślokas. Here, while keeping every sentiment of devotional feelings in tact, the composition of the verse is relaxed in describing a familiar situation, which take place very often in a house-hold, and the gods are no exception to that. According to Hindu mythology Siva has got two sons, Ganeśa and Kārtikeya, and the poet has skillfully utilised this point in order to make a more liberal remark on the whole situation. It is very natural and in the tropicals it is espically so, that children like to play in the water and have fun with it. In case of Siva, where he is keeping such a big stream of water on his head, there is no dirth of water for the children to play. So they started playing there and in the meantime saw the shade of moon-crescent inside the waves of water which they took as a fish and started trying to catch it. These lines reflect two attitudes, one is the common psychology of the children, who were yet not matured enough to make out whether it was the shade of moon or a fish and the other is the possible fondness of a Bengali poet who could even see a fish in the Ganges flowing from the forehead of Siva. Sanskrit anthologies keep a good record of poems, like the one we have considered here.

From the same region comes another copperplate inscription of the time of Laksmanasena (12th cent. A.D.)[1] where the water (*vāri*) of the Ganges is figuratively described.

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[1] India house copperplate of the time of Laksmanasena, Inscriptions of Bengal, Vol. III, p. 85.

विद्युद्यत्र मणिद्युतिः फणिपते
ब्र्वलिन्दुरिन्द्रायुधम् ।
वारि-स्वर्ग-तरंगिनी सित
शिरोमाला बलाकावलिः ।
ध्यानाभ्यास समीरणीय निहितो
श्रेयोङ्करोद्भूतये ।
भूयाद्वः स भवार्ति ताप भिदुरः
शम्मो कपर्दाम्बुदः ।।

Māy that cloud namely the matted hair of *Sambhu* which removes the heat of suffering of his existence, having the flash of the jewel of *sarpa* as it's lightening, the crescent of moon as it's bow of Indra, *Ganga* as its water, the string of white skulls as it's line of flock of *cranes*, lead to the growth of the sprout of your tree of welfare.

Here again Ganga is noted as a stream of water (*vāri-swarga-taranginī*) and not in her anthropomorphic form. The idea of *jatā* being compared with a cloud is quite interesting. The same idea even with more sound effects is noticed in the below mentioned *stotra*. A comparative look of the two will not be out of context. Siva's hair-locks in the stotra are praised as follows :

नवीन मेघ मण्डली निरूद्ध दुर्धस्स्फुरत्
कुहू निशीथिनी तमः प्रबन्ध बद्ध कन्धरः ।
निलिम्प निर्भ्करीधरस्तनोतु कृत्ति सिन्धुरः
कला निधान वन्धुरः श्रियं जदद्धुरन्धरः ।।

May Siva, who . . . etc. . . . etc. . . . extend your welfare *i.e.* may Siva, whose matted hair-locks like a cloud of the darkest midnight, are covering his shoulders (*Kandhara*) where divine river Ganga is present, who is wearing elephant's sking and having the moon on his fore-head, extend your welfare.

While referring these attributes like snake, *jata*, Gangā and Bhasma we are tempted to remember a very witty remark of a poet called *śārngadhara*[1] who says that a compendium of Siva's attributes is full of things which have names beginning with pavarga (*i.e. pa*, *pha*, *ba*, *bha* and *ma*) like *pināka* (the bow), *Phaṇi* (the snake), *Bālendu* (the moon), *Bhasma* (the ashes) and *Mandākinī* (the Ganges). May such a god provide you your *apavarga* (the final liberation). The same poet has given a beautiful simile to the falling stream of Gangā. After observing the scene, probably from sculptures or paintings, he compares Gangā with a female goose, diving downwards to pick up a lotus-string. With the lotus-string he compares the moon on Siva's head, and thus in a beautiful term he calls Gangā as a *Kandārthini-Sura-sarit*. The original verse from the poet is as follows :

दिश्यात्स शीत किरणा
भरण: शिवं वी

यस्योत्तमांग भुवि
विस्फुरदूर्मि पक्षा ।

हंसीव निर्मल शशांक
कला मृणाल

कन्दार्थिनी सुर सरिन्
नभस: पपात् ।।

One other inscription from Rajasthan region from the time of Chahmana king Vigraharaja (A.D. 970) found at a place called Harsha,[2] describes the force of the water of the river Ganges and her might in remarkable words. But as in all the above inscriptions, here also Ganga is described only in her watery-stream form. Lines of the inscription run as follows :

वेगोद्धूर्तायमादि-ग्रह गगन तलं
व्यश्नुवाना जलौघैः ।

न्यक् कुर्पाणा समुद्रान् क्षय वलित जलान्
ऊर्मि माला सहस्रैः ।

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1. Mahāsubhāṣita saṃgrapha, Vol. II, Ed:Sternbach, (Ludwich), Hoshiarpur, 1976.
2. E.I. Vol. II, pp. 117-30, Ed. Kielhorn.

देयादभ्यर्थितं वः शशधरधवला
स्वर्धुनी चन्द्रमौले ।
मौलौ लीलां वहन्ती स्फुट विकट जटा
बन्धने चीरिकायाः ।।

May the river of heaven, who with her masses of water pervades the sky where the sun and the planets are shaken by her velocity and who with the thousands of lines of her waves puts to shame the oceans with their receding water, who, white like the moon appears like a graceful veil on the crest of the moon-crested (god) fast bound with huge uncouth tresses of hair, may she grant your petitions.

Chandra Shekhara Siva. The Chandra Shekhara form of Siva comes under his auspicious forms. The form does not have any definite and popular version or story behind it. Though stories simply fabricated later on for the sake of stories, may be traced cut from the bulky pages of the puranas, yet none of them are so popular as stories concerning other forms. The name Chandra Shekhara is famous because Siva holds a half-moon crescent on his forehead (*Shekhara*). The name generally occurs in the puranas and *āgamas*. In a nutshell, the form as more poetically described by Kalidasa,[1] can be taken as contrary to the form of Siva as *Kapali*, a fearful pose, in which he is holding a bowl in his hand. The prominent features of this form can be enumerated as follows :

In the standing posture of this form, Siva is generally shown with four hands, eyes not specified, objects in hands from right to left are *abhaya-mudrā* and chisel, boon giving (*varada*) pose and the upper left hand which should be in Kartarī-pose, a black deer.

The God should stand erect in *samabhanga*. His *jatā*-crown should show the cresent moon. Left ear ornament should be either of pearls, conch-shells or lotus and the right ear ornament should be either of *makara*, lion-face or a leaf.

In this very form when Siva is shown all alone, he is identified as *Kevala* (alone) *Chandra Shekhara*, but when he is along with his consort Parvati, he is described as *Umā-Sahita-Chandra-Shekhara.* Again in the Umā-Sahita-Chandra-Shekara form, when he is shown seated closer to Parvati in an embracing posture, he is called *Ālingana Chandra Shekhara.*

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[1] Kumarasambhavam, V : 78.

A large number of sculptured Siva-images, are of this form of *Alingana Chandra Shekhara.* Even among the forms of *Hari-hara* and *Ardhā-nārīśvara*, Siva's identity is generally differentiated either by the moon (chandra) on his hair-locks or with a third-eye on his head.

Being a decorative as well as an auspicious form, Chandra Shekhara has attracted the poets, sculptors and worshippers alike. A good number of benedictory verses from various epigraphic records speak elaborately about Siva-Chandra-Shekhara. Vatsabhatti, the celebrated poet of the Mandasor-inscription from the time of Kumara-Gupta I, Bandhuvarman[1] has very highly praised the 'spotless line of the half-moon crescent on Siva's forehead illuminating his hair-locks'.

अमलिन शशि-लेखा दन्तुरं पिंगलानां
परिवहति समूहं यावदीशो जटानाम् ॥

The half-moon crescent which adorns the *jatabhara* of Siva, is very often seen from sculptures and paintings as a tiny semi-circular line. The striking beauty of the moon has also inspired many poets and composers of the royal charters. A very remarkable line on this point may be cited from the Harahā-stone inscription from the time of Isanavarman (553-4 A.C.)[2], where the half-moon is called '*tanvī*'.

तन्वीं ध्वान्तनुदं मृगाकृति भृतो
त्रिभ्रत्कलां मौलिना

Besides, these forms and *narrations*, the moon as one of the planets which represented permanency, has very often formed the subject of verses, particularly those found at the end of the records. A clear example of this type is the concluding lines of the Gwalior-

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1. Fleet, C.I.I. Vol. III, pp. 79 83.
2. E.I. Vol. XIV, pp. 115 ff.

stone inscription of Mihira Kula.[1] Here, the composer of the edict in an *āśirvacana*-style wishes a long life and prosperity to *śilā-prasāda* (a stone-made temple of the god) and says that it should live as long as the moon stays on the forehead of god Sarva.

यावच्छर्वं जटा कलाप गहने विद्योतते चन्द्रमा

The moon is also referred to indirectly in connection with the beauty of god's jatābhāra[2] (*dyutimajjatābhāra*-mandana). For example in the Talagunda-stone inscription from the time of Santivarman (*C* 455-70 A.D.) the poet Kubja has described it as :

स्थाणुरिन्दु-रश्मि-विच्छुरित द्युतिमज्जटा भार मंडन: ।

In an inscription from Betma from the time of King Bhojadeva,[3] we get again a reference about the linear shape of the moon as *Ainda-vīmśirsā-lekhām*.

Apart from these casual references about the moon decorating Siva's hair-locks, from the vast field of epigraphic literature we get a lot of synonyms to the moon, which in fact, are not exactly used as synonyms but rather as beautifying code words. These terms are more important from the point of view of lingual *decency*, richness and style. A glance at a few selected terms, qualifying the moon and it's linear beauty may be interesting to look at.

While talking about the Gangādhara form we have already mentioned 'moon', being mistaken for a fish-moving inside the water of the Ganges. Here it is called *Śaśikalā*. Likewise, in another inscription, (also discussed above) the moon is termed as *Bālendu* and compared with the bow of Lord Indra. *Śaśānka-Kalā* is another name for the moon used by the poet Śārngadhara. The term *Candra-Kalā* is used in the last verses of Deopara-inscription of the time of King Vijayasena (11th cent. A.D.)[4] in a most beautiful way as :

यावच्चान्द्री कलयति कलोत्तंसतां भूत भर्तु:

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1. Select Inscriptions, pp. 424-26.
2. E.I. Vol. VIII, pp. 31 ff.
3. E.I. Vol. XVIII, pp. 322-24.
4. Inscription of Bengal, Vol. III, p. 49.

In the same way the composition of the Bheraghat-inscription from the time of queen Alhanadevi (1156 A.D.)[1] describes it as

भाले कलानिधि कला शशि शेखरस्य

and also as

मुक्तं कलंक कलया शकलं सुधांशो:

The moon is also described as *Ardhendu*, and therefore Siva has a name as *Ardhendu-cūdāmaṇi*, having the same meaning as that of Chandra-Shekhara. A well-known verse[2] from a famous Sanskrit-poet Baṇa, is more than once utilized in the field of inscriptions[3] where Siva with the moon is beautifully praised

नमस्तुंग शिरश्चुम्वि चन्द्र-चामर चारवे

In another inscription from Hindol of the time of Kulastambha, the rays of the moon are praised at that of a *mani*.

शशिमणि-मयुख भासित
पिंगज्जटा भासुरो गिरीश:

Before we close the discussion about the Chandra Shekhara-form of Siva and other references to the moon and the various ways it has been described, it is fitting to have a look at a most beautiful sloka, where it is the moon and not so much Siva as Chandra-Shekhara, which is praised. The verse comes from the India office plate of Laksmanasena[4] (1197 A.D.). Here the moon is described as

शृंगार-द्रुम पुष्पमीश्वर शिखालंकार मुक्तामणि

i.e., the flower on the tree of love, the pearl adorning the head of the lord. Worth seeing are the original lines from the epigraphs.

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1. E.I. Vol. II, pp. 7-17.
2. See : Ratanpur stone inscription of the time of Prithvideva II, E.I. Vol. XXVI, pp. 255-63.
3. See : Arjunvada inscription of Yadava Karna and Chandala grant of the time of Yadava Harihara.
4. E.I. Vol. XXVI, pp. 1-5.

स्वर्गंगा जल पुण्डरीकममृत-
प्रावार-धारा गृहम्
श्रृंगारं-द्रुम-पुष्पमीश्वर-
शिखालंकार मुक्तामणि:
क्षीराम्भोनिधि जीवितं कुमुदिनी
वृन्दैक वैहासिको-
जीयान्मन्मथ राज्य पौष्टिक
महाशान्ति द्विजश्चन्द्रमा: ।।

Umā-Maheswara. It is a very very common form of Siva, which became popular and still enjoys great popularity among Hindu believers. In general, it is a form where Siva '*dampati*' is shown together; *i.e.*, Siva is not shown alone, but along with his wife Parvati. In this form Siva is sometimes shown, receiving Gangā, or he is adorned with the moon on his forehead as Chandra-Shekhara. We have discussed the form of Siva as Uma-Sahita-Chandra-Shekhara in the preceding pages.

Iconographic details of this form, based on the observations of actual images, found from the Gupta-period onward, are given in the works on pure iconography, but from the benedictory verses it is hardly possible to bring out details which give a minute picture of this form. What is generally found from the benedictory verses is a simple statement speaking about Uma and Maheswara seated together. They may be seated on the seat, keeping a small space between then, but they may also be seated very close to each other. This other form which is also identified as Ālingana-Chandra-Shekhara, may just as well be called Umā-Maheśwara. Poetic expressions are mostly found speaking about Umā-Maheśvara form. Sometimes they state that Uma is seated on the left side of Siva's lap and sometimes, indeed they are in *alingana* (embracing each other) as well. Benedictory verses from this category are also many times found to be rather semi-erotic in nature. Many times in these verses it is not only the couple being described in it's pose of embracement, but even the act of love-making. This is a particular feature which seems to be derived from the main body of Sanskrit literature, where we find a lot of verses of this type. Kalidasa's Kumarasambhavam stands as a pioneer work in this field. No doubt many of the later poets, who were also the composers of the grants took inspiration from it and tried to go a few steps further in this direction. One thing about these verses which is remarkable and needs to be repeated is their style and the mood, they have carefully adopted in describing the divine-couple. Poets of these verses, as already said, feel quite at home, when talking about their gods and goddesses. They never confine themselves to the so-called discipline of puritanic morality and deal with the couples as if they are dealing with (or talking about) some mortal beings, their love affairs, longings, embraces etc. Another point which deserves notice is that the verses about the amorous life of Umā and Maheśwara are many times greater in number and more lively in spirit than those about *Laksmī* and *Nārāyaṇa*. It seems that the *puruṣottama* aspect of Visnu did not let the poets feel so close in these matters to him, as to Siva. It is only in the literature from a later date that we get more amorous verses about Laksmi-Narayana. The Gita-Govinda of Jayadeva, derived from Srimad Bhāgawat Purāṇa, may be taken as an example of work in this field. It is curious to note that most of the poets who have charmingly described the love-sports of either Siva and Parvati or Vishu and Laksmi (who are known better from the anthological collections) belong to the north and north-eastern part of India.

So much for the nature of benedictory verses which speak about Siva along with his consort Parvati. Uma-Maheswara have been an ideal couple for Hindus for a long time and even in present day India, they stand as a model for middle-class couples. In rural parts of the country Gaurī, Umā or Parvati, still stands as a most respected lady for the women-folk, whereas Siva as a simple dressed man is an ideal of goodness for the poor labour class agriculturists.

Now coming directly to deal with the benedictory verses talking about Umā and Maheswara, we shall start with an inscription of Kalachuri King Prithvideva II.[1] The inscription, as discussed above, talks, in a very curious way about the love-sports of Uma and Maheswara. The poet of the verses has given a special use to the third eye of the god Siva. He says that Siva has three eyes because when he is making love to Uma he is busy looking at her lotus-like face with his third eye, while, with the remaining other two eyes, he enjoys gazing at the pair of golden pitcher like breasts of Parvati, the daughter of the mountains.

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[1] E.I. Vol. XXVI, pp. 255-63.

यश्चामीकर क्रुम्भ सन्निभ
कुच द्वन्दस्य रत्युत्सवे
क्रीडानेहसि शैलराज दुहितु
र्व्यक्तारविन्दस्य च ।
निष्पर्याय दिहक्षयेव भगवान्
धत्ते स्म नेत्र त्रयं
स श्रेयांसि समातनोतु भवतां
मर्धेन्दु चूडामणिः ।।

In the India office plate from the time of Laksmanasena[1] Uma is described as *Gauri-priya* (*i.e.* Uma, the beloved of Siva) like the lightening flash on the *bosom* of an autumn cloud, in the close embrace of Siva. It may sound very poetic but the simple fact it talks about, is for Ālingana-Uma-Maheswara. Worth seeing are the lines from the inscription :

यस्यां के शरदम्बुदोरसि तडिल्लेखेव गौरी प्रिया

Another sloka where Uma-Maheswara are described in playful situations, occurs in the Nivina copper-plate grant from the time of Dharmarajdeva of the Shailodbhava dynasty.[2] Here, the poet describes Siva in his playful mood, holding the hair of Parvati.

इन्दोर्धातु मृणाल तन्तुभिखि
श्लिष्टाः करैः कोमलैः

बद्धाहेररूणौ स्फुरत्फणि मणे
र्दिग्ध प्रभासोंऽशुभिः

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1. E.I. Vol. XXVI, pp. 1-5.
2. E.I. Vol. XXI, 8, pp. 34-41.

पार्वत्या स कच ग्रह व्यतिकर
व्यावृत्त बन्धश्लथा
गंगाम्भः प्लुति भिन्न भस्म कणिकाः
शंभोर्जटाः पान्तु वः ।।

Besides, there are verses where Uma-Maheswara are said to be seated together, having a chat on some certain topic. In many cases Parvati is found either jesting or scolding Siva for something or the other. In a fragmentary inscription from the time of Chahmana King Vigraharaja from Harsa[1] we find the above said situation where Parvati is jesting at Siva's funny style of dressing himself :

सव्ये शूलं त्रिशिखमपरे
दोष्णि भिक्षा कपालं

भूषा………………….
भुजगः कंठिका नीलकंठे

नेहग्वेष स्त्रिनयन मया
क्वापिद्रष्टो विचित्र

इत्थं गौर्या प्रहसित हरः
सस्मितः पातु युष्मान् ।।

But, as said before, most of the poets enjoyed describing the love affairs of Umā and Maheśwara more than anything else. One more example of the type we get from a Deopara inscription of King Vijayasena[2] (11th cent. A.D.). At the time of love-making Siva removes the breast-cloth (*vākṣānśuka*) of Parvati, and she in return while taking her wreath from her head, puts out the light of the lamp in their sleeping chamber. Siva looks at the timid face of Parvati and smiles. May the smiles of the god be victorious.

वक्षोंशुका हरण साध्वस कृष्ट मौलि
माल्यच्छटाहत रतालय दीपभासः

देव्या स्त्रपा मुकुलितं
मुखमिन्दुमाभिः

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1. E.I. Vol. II, pp. 117-30.
2. Inscriptions of Bengal, Vol. III, p. 46.

वीक्ष्याननानि हसितानि
जयन्ति शंभोः ।।

Needless to say that the composition of this verse has gone a further than Kalidasa in the description of eroticism. It seems that in the name of Uma Maheswara, many poets were busy describing their own lust.

Kalyāṇa-Sundara-Śiva. Kalyana is welfare of humanity and *Sundara* is lovely or beautiful, hence the form Siva took at the time of his marriage with Parvati is called *Kalyāṇa-Sundara*. According to mythology, Siva, after the death of Satī, the daughter of *Prajāpati Dakṣa*, decided to lead a life of an ascetic and never to marry again. But at the time when gods were frightened because of the tortures of the demon *Tāraka* and were seriously in trouble, they implored Siva to marry again for the welfare of humanity. He agreed to their requests and gave his consent to marry with the daughter of the mountain : Parvati. This incident of his marriage-ceremony when picturised in visual arts, or described in poetic composition, is popularly known as the form of Kalyāṇa Sundra. It is an ever auspicious form and speaking from the cultural point of view, it also reflects the ideal way of Hindu marriage.

Plastic representations of Kalyāṇa Sundara as seen on the lovely panels of Ellora, Aihole, Badhami, and many other temple sites, are of two basic categories. The first is the simpler form where Siva is shown standing, holding a trident in his left hand and with his right hand touching (or holding) the hand of Parvati who is often shown standing to the right side of Siva. In the second form we see a lot of divinities present at the time of marriage, prominent among them is Brahma, shown as an officiating priest at the ceremony. Next to Brahma is the mountain Himalaya (in this personified form as the father of Parvati) and Visnu. Apart from them many other minor gods and *ganas* of Siva are also observed in the panel.

Now the particular pose of Siva in this form, holding the hand of Parvati who stands on his right hand side is explained as that of

Pāṇi-grahaṇa-samskāra (the ceremony of holding the hand of the bride) serving as first part of the marriage-ceremony. After this ceremony a bride is supposed to stand on the left handside of the bridegroom and not on the right handside anymore. The presence of Himalaya, the father of the bride is explained as having the function of *Kanyā-dāna*. *Kanya*, the unmarried virgin girl. In Hindu society and culture this girl was and still is, to some extend, considered as a traditional heritage of its Dharma, and was given to the bridegroom at the time of the marriage-ceremony by the father, as a gift (dana). Curiously enough that it is not that, we find these scenes are not only depicted rather in an ideal way in our art and literature, but we see them very often in our every day life also, even today. Howsoever modified, or in an orthodoxical sense, deteriorated, the old customs may be, the ceremonies like that of *Pani grahana* and *Kanyā-dāna* are still performed at every Hindu style marriage. In order to make out a cultural note from the above mentioned depictions in art, and various literary and epigraphical characterisations, one may easily glean out the fact that the existing rituals of *Pāṇi grahana* and *Kanyādāna* have a pretty old tradition themselves. Their roots, are rooted very deep in the past of Indian religion and culture. This is why, in most of the marriage-ceremonies today, the folk-songs sung by the elderly ladies of the community or the Sanskrit verses recited by the local pandits, speak invariably about the marriage of Siva with Parvati. There are many verses floating all over the country on this topic in many languages, (though mostly in their unknown, unpublished verbal forms) that they may need totally a new project of research to collect them and put them all at place, in sequence.

An extra word about the paintings and drawings on this theme will be fitting to the context. The history of Indian painting, besides the mural paintings of Ajanta and Bagh caves, is rather late in orgin. But what we get from the miniatures of the late period is sufficient enough to throw a good light on the over-popularity of the theme of Siva's marriage amongst regional painters. Some very good examples are seen in the museums and in many private collections from the region of Punjab hills or the Kangra valley. Also in the Garhwal region we can find some fine example of this subject.

We get references about the Kalyana Sundara form of Siva in the benedictory verses of the post Gupta-period inscriptions.

The only sloka on this form, cited below comes from the Ratanpur-stone inscription from the time of Kalachuri King Prithvideva II[1] (1163 A.D.) which in figurative though very precise terminology speaks about the marriage (*parinaya*) of Siva and Parvati.

ब्रह्मेन्द्रोपेन्द्र चन्द्र द्युमणि कुल गिरि
क्ष्मा समुद्रादि रूपैः ।
लोक संक्रान्त विम्वं नख मुकुर तले
यत्पदाब्जांगुलीनाम् ।
द्रष्ट्वा शैलेन्द्र पुत्री परिणय समये
विस्मयं प्राप लज्जा
नम्रीभूताननेन्दु स हरतु दुरित
पार्वती वल्लभो वः ॥

The translation of the verse as given by the editor of the record[2] runs as follows :

'May that lover of Parvati remove your sin! seeing the nails of whose lotus like feet as in the surface of a mirror, the reflection of the universe in the forms of Brahma, Indra, Visnu, the moon, the jewel of heaven (sun), the principal mountains, the earth, the oceans and other things. Parvati (the daughter of the lord of mountains), at the time of her marriage was struck with wonder and her moon-like face was bent in bashfulness.'

A simple explanation of the verse is, that at the time of the marriage, since Parvati was feeling quite shy and her head was bent down act of bashfulness, she could not bare to face the divinities like Brahma, Visnu, Indra and others who were present at the occasion.

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1. E.I. Vol. XXVI, pp. 255-63.
2. Mirashi, (V.V.).

Eventually what she could see was the glimpse coming out from the shining toe nails of her (or may be Siva's) feet.

From the cultural point of view, there are two very important points which deserve explanation. One is that 'she was struck with wonder' (Vismayaṅi-prāpa) and the other is that 'her head was bent down out of bashfulness' (lajjā-namrī bhūta-ananenduh). These statements reflect on the existing conventions of the contemporary society, where most probably the *purdah* system was in vogue. Considering the date of the inscription, *i.e.*, middle of the twelfth century A.D., even otherwise it does not seem to be improbable. As commonly believed this system was not in fashion in ancient India and came to be known more through the Islamic influences. A pictorial evidence which may be cited in support of the above statement is a depiction of the same theme coming from the post-Gupta period (5th to 7th cent. A.D. onward) sculptures, where Parvati is never shown in a mood of either wonder or bashfulness. Contrary to this, there are some line drawings from a later date where Parvati is shown like a present-day newly married bride.

Besides the forementioned benedictory sloka from epigraphy, we come across some very interesting and fanciful reference from the literary side. As early as the time of *Gāthā-sapta-śatī*[1] we get a wonderful remark on the *parinaya* of Siva and Parvati. The poet of the verse, cited below from *Sapta-śatī* says 'that right after the *pāṇigrahana*-ceremony of the marriage of Siva was over, he started becoming more and more affectionate towards Parvati, as he replaced his snake-armlet (*i.e.*, the snake he was wearing as an armlet of jewels') and this change in his style and mood was claverly marked by the friends of Parvati as an ominous mark of good luck.[2]

पाणि ग्रहण एव पार्वत्या
ज्ञातं सखीभिः सौभाग्यम् ।

पशुपतिना वासुकि
कंकणेऽपसारिते दूरम् ।।

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1. Gupta Sapta-śatī, Sātavāhana, Hāla, Kāvyamālā series, No. 21, Bombay, 1911.
2. *Ibid*, I : 69.

Another sloka on this occasion which is very often noticed within Sanskrit anthologies, comes from the *Vidha Śāla bhanjikā*[1] of Raja Shekhara. Main theme of his sloka is to comment on Siva's marriage.

A peculiar point of this sloka, like that of the one we already have discussed above from epigraphy, is to describe Parvati feeling a little shy and nervous at the time she met Siva during their marriage. But the reason Raja Shekhara has thought for her bashfulness, is altogether different than the reasons of the verse cited above. It is no exaggeration to say that inspite of their best artistic executions, the artists from the Gupta period onward, could not resolve the ever contradictory aspects of the personalities of Siva and Parvati.

Raja Shekhara starts with the favourite attributes of Siva like Nandī (the bull), *sarpa* (the snake), *Visa* (the poison in his throat) and the *bhūtas* (demons etc., as *ganas*) who cover the whole person of Siva. Now, mixing the fact from his common sense, the poet says that *Nandī* has an awful smell, *sarpa* is dangerous for Parvati if it bites, poison is deadly by all means and *bhūtas* form an awful company.

Now, fancy of the poet, by the way of citing the attributes of Parvati, settles the problem cleverly and puts the whole situation to auspicious state of adjustment.

According to the poet, for the awful smell of the bull (Nandi) Parvati arranged some incenses and perfumes, for the snakes she acquired some herbs (*auṣadhi*), on the arms which could come in contact with Siva's poisonous *Kaṁtha*, she put armlets duely decked with anti-poisonous gems, and for *bhutas* she learned certain *mantras* from the elderly ladies from her neighborhood. Thus, remarks the poet, such a capable daughter of the mountain will certainly succeed in properly adjusting to varied situations, and making her house full of happinesses (Kalyāṇa). (May that Parvati look after your goods.)

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1. Viddha śāla bhanjikā, Raja Shekhara.
   Calcutta Oriental Series, No. 30, Calcutta 1943.

गोनासाय नियोजितादगरजा:
सर्पाय वद्धौषधि: ।

कण्ठस्थाय विषाय वीर्यमहृत:
पाणौ मणीन्विभ्रती ।

भर्तुर्भुतगणायं गोत्र जरती
निर्दिष्ट मंत्राक्षरा

रक्षत्वद्रि-सुता विवाह् समये
प्रीता च भीता च व: ।।

There is another verse collected in anthologies which gives a graphic description of the time of *Pāṇi-grahana*. In the *vivāha-mandapa*, Siva and Parvati are standing along with many other persons. Brahma is there to preside over the ceremony. As a result of the fire caused by a sacrifice, Parvati feels alot of smoke in her eyes and wants to refresh a little with the help of moon-rays. But as she lifts her head up she is seen by Brahma and being bashful, she looks downward again at the shining nails of Siva. There, in the reflection of the nails, she sees a shadow of another lady on the head of Siva (in the form of Gangā) which makes her feel jealous of that lady. But in the meantime her hands are touched by Siva which gives her a happy feeling once again. [May that Gauri look after the welfare of yours.[1]]

धूम व्याकुल दृष्टिरिन्दु किरणै
राह्लादिताक्षी पुन:

पश्यन्तीव समुत्सुका नतमुखी
भूयो ह्रियाब्रह्मण: ।

सेर्ष्या पादनखेन्दु दर्पण गते
गंगां दधानं हरे:

स्पर्शादुत्पुलका कर-ग्रह विधौ
गौरी शिवाया स्तु व: ।।

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[1] *Subhasita ratna bhāndāgāram*
Ed. Narayan Acharya, p. 12 : 32.

Rāvana anugraha mūrti of Siva.

This form is related to the ever pleasing *āśutoṣa* nature of Siva. The literal meaning of the term is Siva showing mercy to Ravana, the King of the *Raksasas*. The story behind this form is narrated in various *puranas* and in the Ramayana as well. It is said that Rāvana, the King of the Raksasas, who was also a great devotee of Siva used to come every day from his capital to the Kailāsa mountain to worship Lord Siva. But in the course of time, because of the long distance between his city and the abode of Siva (*i.e.* Kailasa) it became difficult for him to visit regularly and pray to his favourite god. As a result, once, when he was at Kailāsa, he decided to shake the whole mountain loose and take it away to his own place. With firm determination he attempted to lift up the whole mountain in his hands, which made all the inhabitants of the mountain, including parvati, (but excluding the god Siva) panic. Siva, who could easily understand the reason for this shake-up because of his spiritual insight, pressed the mountain with his left toe. From the pressure of the toe of Siva, Rāvana, who had almost succeded in taking up the mountain in his arms, was badly smashed under it. Rāvana, with all his ten heads and twenty arms badly pressed under the mountain for a long time, could not find any relief or way out. Therefore, at length, he decided to pray to the Lord, and, to conclude the story, Siva showed mercy (*anugraha*) on him. This pose of showing mercy is known by two common names. One is *Ravanānugrah* and the other is Ravana shaking Kailāsa. The theme of this story was very popular with sculptors who found a lot of scenes to depict from a rather short story. This is why we get the depiction of Ravanānugraha-form at almost every Siva temple site. Still, the best representations of this form are those from the cave temple of Ellora. What is more interesting in this form, particularly from an aesthetic point of view, is the depiction of Ravana's ten heads and twenty arms, pressed under the heavy weight of the mountain, in which Siva is shown seated in a merciful mood along with his whole *parivāra*.

Coming back to the field of benedictory verses in order to find a reference about this form of Siva, we should admit at the very outset, that there are not so many verses devoted to this theme as to many other forms of Siva. This remark is particularly valid in relation to the field of verses from inscriptions.

It is difficult to claim any authority on the subject because of the vastness of the epigraphical material has been found. But, so far, only one verse on this form. This single sloka appears in the Pallava inscriptions of the seven pagodas.[1] In this sloka which is cited below, the strength of the toe of Lord Siva is highly praised, since it could even, with a slight push, press down the heavy mountain of Kailasa along with Ravana himself.

यस्यांगुष्ठ भराक्रान्तः कैलासस्सदशाननः ।
पातालमगमन्मूर्ध्ना श्रीनिधिस्तम्बिभर्त्यजम् ।।

Ugra rūpa-Siva. Amongst the Ugra-form of Siva come those iconographic images which are related with the incidents of certain violent and aggressive activities of the god. In the famous trinity of Hindu gods, Siva is known as a god of destruction, a killer of demons and wild creatures who tortures the world. The most famous Ugra-forms of Siva as they are enumerated in the agamas and Slipa-sastras, are thoes of *Gajāntaka Andhakāntaka*, *Bhairava-Sadāśiva* and Natarāja etc. Now, before we start discussing these forms, it seems necessary to mention their relative scarcity in benedictory verses. From a quick survey of the material from epigraphs about the Ugra-form of Siva, it appears that the poets and many composers of the grants felt more delight in talking about the *Saumya*-form of Siva rather than the Ugra-forms. This may be the reason that we get very few verses about forms like *Natarāja*, *Gajāntaka* and *Andhakāntaka* etc. Contrary to this, from the field of iconographic representations in art, we come across many images devoted to these forms of Siva. For example the famous Nataraja-images, are greater in number than all the images devoted to the Saumya-form of Siva put together. Another possible reason for the scarcity of benedictory verses on these forms, may be that

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1. E.I. Vol. X, p. 8.

from the back-ground stories or the attributes the poets of the grants didn't find much plot to inspire their fancies, as they had easily done with so many forms of the Saumya-type. Whereas the artists found the Ugra-forms more exciting and full of the possibilities with which they could show their skill more freely than before.

Siva as Gajāntaka. There is a story from the Siva Purana, in which a demon once took the form of an elephant. He was known as *Gajāsura.* Now this Gajāsura became so powerful and tyrranical that the created fear in the whole world, including the gods in heaven. Finally, as usual, all the gods including Indra assembled together and decided to approach Siva for help against Gajāsura. Siva, being pleased with the prayers of the gods, first decided to tame the demon but when he found him difficult and violent, he trapped him within the arrows of his trident (*triśūla*) and hanged him by his head. Later on, while hanging in this difficult position, Gajāsura prayed to Siva, and died. Being pleased with the last prayers of the demon, Siva took his skin as a covering for himself. Since then he has the a name of Gajājina, that is, one who wears the skin (ajina) of an elephant (*Gaja*).

Many plastic representations of this particular form of Siva, as Gajāntaka appeared, following the circulation of this story. In stone sculptures, a very condensed form of the story is found depicted in which Siva is shown as either hanging the elephant above his head, or wearing the skin of it on his shoulders. But in some of the later-date paintings from the Chamba region and Punjab the full details of the story are found. There is a beautiful miniature painting from the Kangra valley,[1] where all of the Siva-family is shown, covering themselves with the skin of the elephant. These facts and minute details, as said above, could not be improved upon by the poets. Famous poets like Kalidasa, have referred to this incident simply by using a term *Gajājinālambi*,[2] which, occurse, says that Siva killed Gajāsura and took his skin to cover his

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1. Randhawa, (M.S.), Kangra Valley Paintings.
2. Kumara Samhovam, V. 67, 78.

own body, but the expression is not as vivid on forceful as it is in paintings.

A benedictory verse taken from the Chandrehe inscription from the reign of Kalachuri King Prabodha Siva[1] (973 A.D.) mentions this form. Here, Gajantaka Siva is addressed as *Nāgacarma-avṛtah*, one who is covered with the skin of an elephant (naga). In this same inscription, a very good simile for the colour of the elephant's skin is used. The poet has compared the colour of the skin with that of a cloud floating in the vicinity of the moon. The sloka runs as follows :

हंस श्येनी-हसित महसां
संहतिश्शंकरस्य ।

स्फशिभूतावदनमभितो
नाग चर्मावृतस्य ।

किचित्कण्ठच्छवि कलुषिता
मेघ निर्यन्मृगांक ।

च्छायां स्वच्छां सपदि दधती
सम्पदं वो दधातु ॥

May the mass of the lustre of the laugh of Śankara *clad in an elephant skin* which is as white as the geese, when it is spread around his (Siva's) face and which is slightly darkened by the reflection of his (dark black or blue) neck (and) which (therefore) bears the clear splendour of the moon emerging from a cloud, bring you prosperity.

Another remarkable reference about this form is taken from the India office plate of Laksmanasena[2] where the same of Śiva-*Pancānana* is used. The relevant portion, which cites the Gajāntaka form, occurs in the last line of the sloka, which, in fact, governs the whole verse.

यस्यांके शरदम्वुदोरसि
तडिल्लेखेव गौरी-प्रिया ।

देहार्धेन हरिं समाश्रितमभूद्
यस्याति चित्रं वपुः ।

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1. E.I. Vol. XXI, 23 pp. 148-53.
2. E.I. Vol. XXVI, pp. 1-5.

दीप्ताक्कंद्युति लोचन त्रय-रूचा
घोरं दधानो मुखम्,
देवस्त्वां स निरस्त दानव-गज:
पुष्णातु पंचानन: ।।

May the god *Pancānana* give you prosperity, in whose embrace his beloved Gauri is seated like the lightening flash on the bosom of an autumn cloud, whose resplendent form rests with half of his body in Hari (Visnu, see Hari-hara form), who makes his countenance terrible with three eyes shining like the burning sun, who as a lion (pancānana) has vanquished the elephant demon.

Commenting on the last line of the verse as an unintelligible translation, Dr. Rande,[1] editor of the inscription, prefers that the term *Devha sha nirasta-dānava-gajah* etc. should be translated as Siva, 'who as a lion has vanquished the *elephants* who are the *danayas*' and not like it is done above. Here the whole clause as '*Devah Sah nirasta dānava-gajah tvām puṣṇātu*' has not been properly explained by the editor, as *gajah* is used in it's nominative singular case and not invariably in plural (which may give the sense as elephants). Therefore it seems more possible that reference is made here to Gajāsura or Danava-gajah in a compound form, who was, of course, killed (nirastah) by Siva. The pun is here on the word *pancānana* which means lion as well as one who has five faces *i.e.*, Siva. May be, it has also some relation with the evolution of the concept of *Śiva-Gajāntaka.* It is a well known fact (also used in the classical poems) that a lion enjoys killing an elephant. Therefore, it may be possible that when Siva killed an elephant-demon, the *curious* mythologists may have preferred to give him a special name, *pancanana.* But, as the subject is beyond the scope of iconography and is more a subject for the linguist (who may see which of the two meaning of the word is older, we leave it here.

Before closing the discussion on this form, a word about Visnu and Siva's opposing forms related to the elephant, may be interesting.

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[1] *Ibid.*, f.n. 3.

Just as Siva is known as Gajāntaka, so is Visnu known as *Gajendra-moksa*. The contradiction becomes clear from the meanings of the two forms, one is : killer of the elephant and the other is : a reliever of the elephant.

When comparing the relative antiquity of these two forms,[1] common sense will assume the protective aspect to predate the destructive. And, curiously enough, we do get archaelogical support for this presumpton since the *Gajendra Moksa* form is found represented earlier than the *Gajāntaka* form of Siva.

Andhakāntaka Siva. As with other names, there is a story behind this form. It is said that there was a demon called Andhaka—one who may create darkness. So, accordingly he once created such a bitter darkness in the whole universe, that all the living creatures started suffering. During their suffering, finding no other relief, they all assembled and prayed to Lord Siva to remove this darkness. He killed the demon *Andhaka* and set the world free from darkness.

This is a very rare form, seldom seen in sculptures and paintings. In literature, poets have casually used this name more as a fitting *anuprāsa* to their rhyme than with any serious meaning.

The only verse we could gather so far, comes from the Haraha-stone inscription from the time of Maukhari King Isanavarman[2] (553 A.D.). In the last line of the second verse of this inscription there is a clear mention of Siva as *Andhaka-vidvisa*, the energy of *Andhaka*. But in the three proceeding lines Siva's snakes, hair-locks, the moon, and so on, were also mentioned.

आशोणां फणिनः फणोपल रूचा
सैहीं वसानं त्वचम्,

शुभ्रां लोचन-जन्मना कपिशयद्
भासा कपालावलीम् ।

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1. For the 'Parallels and opposites in Indian Iconography', *see* : Sivaramamurti, J.A.S., Letters, Vol. XXI, No. 2, 1955, pp. 77-96.
2. E.I. Vol. XIV, pp. 110-20, verse 2.

तन्वीं ध्वान्तनुदं मृगाकृतिभृतो
विभ्रत्कलां मौलिना,
दिश्यादन्धक विद्विष: स्फुरदहि
स्थेय: पदं वो वपु: ।।

One more relevant fact revealed by the same inscription is, that one of the predecessors of King Isanavarmana called Suryavarman, had noticed the temple of Siva-*Andhakāntaka* in a broken state while he was out hunting. Suryavarman had it repaired and also enlarged the temple building a bit. After a second repair, cleaning and renovation of this temple during the reign of King Isanavarman, the lines of the present inscription were engraved on a piece of stone. The other popular name of this temple of *Andhakāntaka* was *Kṣemesvara.*

Talking about the pious deeds of Suryavarman, the poet says that :

तेनानतोन्नतिकृता मृगया गतेन
दृष्ट्वाद्यामन्धक भिदो भवनं विशीर्णम् ।
स्वेच्छा समुन्नतमकारि ललाम भूमे:
क्षेमेश्वर प्रथित नामशशांक शुभ्रम् ।।

Bhairava and Ghoramukha etc. A possible meaning of the name *Bhaya-Rava* is one who created great fear in the universe by making a terrible sound. The meaning of this term becomes clear after seeing the fearful form of Siva in which one of his mouths is open and the bulging teeth are shown as if they are coming out. A very good example of this form is seen at the Elephanta-cave.

Benedictory verses belonging to this form are also few and far between. One rare example comes from the Chandrehe inscription from the reign of King Prabodhasiva (973 A.D.) where with some interpretation, a Bhairava form of Siva may be recognized. The clue leading to this interpretation is the reference to his terrifying garland of skulls (Kapalānām māla) which occurs only in the last line of the verse.

फणिश्वास श्यामे
स्वनदमरनद्यम्भसि च यज्

जटा जूटाम्भोदे
नयनशिखिविद्युद्विलसति ।
तथा चुडा-चन्द्रद्युति निकर
घारेव ककुभम् ।
कपालानां माला
तुलयति च सर्व्वो विजयते ॥

Om adoration to Siva! Victorious is that Siva in whose piles of matted hair, (being like) a cloud in the humming waters of the divine river (Ganges) dark with the hissing of snakes (on Siva's body) flashes the lightening (in the form) of the fire of (his third) eye and whose garland of human skulls elevates the quarters even as the shower of the concentrated radiation of the moon on (his) crest.

Another example of the type comes from the India office plate of Laksmanasena[1] where in the third line of the benedictory sloka, Siva's three eyes and his frightful face are mentioned.

दीप्तार्क्कद्युति-लोचन त्रय रूचा
घोरं दधानं मुखम् ।

Later on, in the field of iconography as well as religious literature, these terrible forms of Siva were utilized by Tantrists. As a result of this further multiplication of Siva's forms, often, forms like Bhairava, Sarva and Sadāśiva etc. started looking alike showing only minute differences in their iconographic identity. This also occured in lilerature, where many times the terms like *Kāpali*, *Kapardin*, *Ghoramukha*, *Bhairava*, *Sarva*, *Sadaśiva and Virūpākṣa* were used in some places for the same deity, but in other places for the deity in different iconographic form.

Nataraja Siva. The form of Siva as *Nataraja*, *Nateśa* or *Nrtyeśvara* was and still is a curious theme for devotees, religio-philosophic thinkers, artists, painters, poets, writers and connoisseurs of Indian art-history alike. Siva Nataraja, as a bare concept, goes back to pre-Gupta times, though the early representations of Nataraja are hardly found prior to the Gupta period. Anyway, what is

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1. E.I. Vol. XXVI, pp. 1-5.

important about this form is not so much the antiquity, but the popularity it received from every side from Indian art, culture, religion, society, literature, dance, drama, music. It is no exaggeration to say that hardly any ancient culture of the world has such a popular and powerful master (*raja*} of dance (*nrittya*) as we have in the form of Siva Nataraja. It is even more interesting to say that this dance of the master is not only for the sake of amusement. It is a dance which has a cosmic force in it. The dance of Nataraja is a universal dance which trembles the whole cosmos on one side and makes it stable again on the other. It combines the rythm of life, shelter and *abhaya* on one hand and destruction of all the evils on the other. In fact, in the form of Siva Nataraja all his auspicious (*saumya*) and inauspicious (*ugra* or *asiva*) aspects of divinity are found mixed in one and the same image. It is not only in the field of iconography that the image of Nataraja has no parallels (in spite of the fact that there are many forms and features of different icons represented in it) but in it's philosophic iconology as well, it stands as a never surpassed model of eternity.

Coming to the field of plastic art, we see that the image of Nataraja from ancient days up to the present has been a very popular one. There is a hardly any temple or a monument found devoted to, or related with Siva, where we do not get an image of Nataraja. Besides this, it has also been a popular theme for every kind of religious art-expression whether it was made on stone, wood, metal, on the smooth surface of a wall by way of painting, or even on a paper. In the same way, the popularity of the Nataraja form has also expanded it's fame to almost land where the germs of Hindu culture could reach and prosper.

In short, the unique form of Siva Nataraja has covered the whole area of Hindu thought, culture, art, literature and almost everything. After the pioneering essay of Coomaraswamy[1] entitled the 'Dance of

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1. Coomaraswamy, A.K. *Dance of Siva.*

Siva' a monumental work has been published by a great savant of Indian art history.[1]

Talking about benedictory verses related to the theme of Nataraja, we would once more like to refer our readers to the work of Mr. Sirvaramamurti, where in one of the chapters many of the revelant verses from various inscriptions are dealt with in sufficient detail. The above quoted work is also a good pictorial reference containing many illustrations from art which are apt and appropriate for the various descriptions from literature and epigraphs.

To sum up the whole discussion, we may site here a very famous (hence frequently quoted) sloka from the chandrehe inscription from the time of Prabodhasiva. In this sloka, using onomatopoea the dance of the Nataraja and it's after-effects are very carefully described.

चारीसंचरण प्रवीण चरण
व्यापारणा घूर्णिता,
क्षोणी कुण्डनमत्फणीश्वर फणं
विद्राणदिग्वारणम् ।
दोर्दण्ड भ्रमणादकाण्ड चलित
ब्रह्माण्ड खण्डंमुदे
भूयाद्वो निविडक्वणड्डमरूकं
चण्डी पतेस्ताण्डवम् ।।

May the Tandava dance of Siva (the Lord of Chandi) give you pleasure which caused the hood of *Śeṣa* (the King of snakes) to bend down owing to the vortex created by the earth revolving in accordance with the movements of the feet of Siva who is skilled in practising the *chāri* step (in dancing) whose dance put to flight the elephants of the cardinal points because of the revolutions of his rod like arms, and whose dance suddenly caused commotion in parts of the universe (and) which (was accompanied by the) deep sound of the *damaru* give you pleasure.

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[1] For further details on Nataraja *see* : Sivaramamurti's work on Nataraja : In Indian thought, literature and arts, New Delhi, 1976.

It may be interesting for a moment to look at some similar lines from the Siva-Tandava stotram, expressing the deep sound of the damaru of Siva with exactly the same onomatopoeic tune as that of the inscription.

डमड् ड्मड् डमड् डमन्निनाद वड्डमर्वयं
न्चकार चण्ड ताण्डवं तनोतु नः शिवः शिवम् ।।

3. *Ardha-nārīśvara: an androgynous form of Siva.* The name Ardha-nāri-īśvara is a compound of three words, Ardha, Nāri and Isvara, meaning Īśvara (*i.e.* Siva) with the Nāri (*i.e.* Pārvati) as his ardha (*i.e.* half). A form where the same body is shared by Siva and Parvati each of whom represent one half of the complete image. Therefore, whenever Siva is shown, in the field of plastic art or described in the literary works, benedictory verses, prayers and stotras with the above details he is identified as Ardha-nārīśvara.

The myth of Ardhanārīśvara. As understood by the explanation of the name itself, myths related to this form of Siva seem to be closer to the famous myths of man-woman unity where, as the cause of creation, the male and female counterparts are always narrated as being interdependent and fusing together.

One of the prominent myths of the world, which have a similar concept to Ardhanārīśvara myth, is the well-known Greek myth of the Hermaphrodite. To be more precise on this point, it will not be out of place to have a quick glance at the famous myth of the Hermaphrodite in this context. A short summary of the Greek myth is as follows :

Among Aphrodite's children there was Harmonia, who was born of Ares, and a son Hermaphroditus, born of Hermes. Aphrodite wanted to conceal the birth of this son and immediately after his birth gave him in safe keeping to the nymphs of mount Ida, who brought him up in the forest. The youth, nurtured in the lap of beauty, was exceedingly charming. He was wild, strong, handsome and he spent most of his time hunting and enhancing the forests with breath-taking charm. Once, he chanced to reach the limpid lake in the Caria-forests. The transparant waters invited him to bath. The nymph Salamacis was thrilled by his extreme beauty and lithe figure.

She desired him and entreated him to make love and accept her. He repulsed her tactlessly and incurred her extreme displeasure. In her desperation and rage she begged the gods that 'nothing may ever seperate me from him or he from me'. Instantly Salamacis and Hermaphroditus were united into one body. In their double form they were neither man nor woman. They had no sex and were condemned to remain as unseperated twins (quoted from "Greek myths"). The myths explicit Greek personality is undeniable. Now we can compare this with the myth of Ardhanārīśvara.

The Siva Purana says that Brahma first begot a number of Prajapatis and commanded them to create various other beings. They were found unfit for the task for which they were intended and Brahma feeling uneasy at the pace of creation contemplated on Mahesvara. The latter appeared before him in the composite form of male-female and asked him to cease feeling distressed. Hitherto it did not occur to Brahma to create females also, and, the sight of Mahesvara in the form of Ardhanārīśvara made him realise his error. There-upon he prayed to the female half of Mahesvara; Uma to give him a female to proceed with the act of creation. Brahma's request was complied with and the creation went on afterwards very well.

There is another myth relating to Ardhanāriśvara. On a certain occasion when Siva was seated with his consort, Parvati, on the top of the Kailasa mountain, the *devas* and *rsis* went there to pay their homage to him. All of them except *rsi* Bhringi went round both Siva and Parvati in their circumambulations and also bowed to both. This *rsi* had a vow of worshipping only one being and in inconformity with the vow he neglected to go round or bow down to Parvati. Growing angry with Bhringi she desired in her mind that all his flesh and blood should disappear from his body. Instantly he was reduced to a skeleton covered over only with the skin. In this state he was unable to support himself in an erect position. Seeing his pitiable condition, Siva gave him a third leg, so he could maintain his balance. Bhringi became pleased with his Lord and out of joy danced vigorously with three legs and praised Siva for his grace. The design of Parvati to humble Bhringi thus failed. The failure caused great annoyance to her, who returned to do penance, Siva pleased with his consort, granted her wish of being united with his own body. Thus was the Ardhanārīśvara form assumed by Siva to make it difficult for Bhringi to circumambulate or bow to Siva alone. But undaunted by this impedinent Bhringi assumed the form of a beetle and pierced a hole through the composite body of Siva-Parvati and circumambulated Siva alone to the great wonder and admiration of even Parvati, who became reconciled to Bhringi's vow and bestowed her grace upon the pious *rsi* for his steadfastness in his vow.[1]

An eminent scholar has referred to Ardhanārīśvara as a Hermaphrodite of Indian myth.[2] He may be right in a literal sense, but one feels strange that he did not consider the mythic dimensions of the Greek term. In the Greek Hermaphrodite there is a conflict and a tragic sequel to a consuming physical passion. The immediate impact on one's mind is of human psychology and it's motive force on behaviour. The conflict of woman unreconciled to her lover and her ultimate revenge on life is obvious. Here, there is no effort to rise above the levels of sensual love or to attain harmony of understanding through selflessness and sacrifice.

In contradiction to the Greek myth the Ardhanārīśvara myths have no frustrations which motivate the uniting of the forms of Siva and Parvati. They are intimate on physical as well as on other planes, without losing traits belonging to their respective sexes. Parvati is not barren, nor is she without the proverbial vanity of womanhood. Siva too, is full of grace even to the extent of being prone to flattery (supposedly a common masculine weakness).

Ideology behind the form of Ardhanārīśvara. The Ardhanārīśvara murti of Siva symbolizes the syncretic ideology as it apparently emphasizes the union of the principal cult deities or Śaivism and Śāktism. It is this ideological union of Siva and *Śakti* which has been delineated by many early and late texts. Statements of certain scholars[3] that 'the Ardhanārīśvara and *Haryardha* images of Siva do

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1. Rao Gopinath, (T.A.), *Hindu Iconography.*
2. *Nataraja*, p. 92.
3. Banerji, (S.N.), *Development of Hindu iconography*, Calcutta, 1941, pp. 198-99.

not illustrate any particular ideology of a myth and simply belong to the Saumya aspect of the god' does not seem tenable. We have noticed mythical narrations explaining the ideology behind the careful composition of Siva's form as Ardhanārīśvara. What seems more reasonable in this regard, is the fact that the myths related to Siva and Parvati very much characterise the ideology of the cult of syncretism in an interesting manner. As we have said before in a wider sense, they illustrate the eternal interdependency of man-woman unity. The unity which ultimately represents a cause of creation in the world.

Iconography of Ardhanārīśvara. An iconographic description of the image of Ardhanārīśvara is given in the *Aṁśumad-bhedāgama*, *Kāmikāgama Supraphedāgama*, *Śilpa-ratna Kāranāgama* and a few other works. According to these texts the male-half of the image should have a *jatā mukata* on his side of the head which should be adorned with the crescent of moon. In the right side ear there should be the *Nakra-Kuṁdala*, *Sarpa-Kuṁdala* or an ordinary *Kuṁdala* and the right-half of the forehead should have one half of an eye sculptured on it.

The image of Ardhanārīśvara may have two, three or four arms. If there are four arms, one of the right hands should be held in *abhaya*-pose and the other should hold *paraśu* or one hand may also be in *varada*-pose, the other carrying a *śula*, or there may be a *tanka* in one hand and the other may be held in *abhaya*-pose. In short, the whole of the right side of the god should be adorned with the attributes and ornaments peculiar to Siva. The chest on the right side should also be of a man. Garments should cover up to knee or below the loins only. On the right half of the chest there should be a *naga yjñopavīta* and on the lion a *sarpa-mekhalā*.

On the head of the female-half of the deity on the left side, there should be a *Karanda-Mukata*. On the forehead a half a *tilaka*-mark. In the ear a *Kumdala-vālikā*. If the image has four arms, of the two left ones, one should rest on *Nandī*, other should be in a *Kataka*-pose holding a *Nīlotpala*. If there be only three arms, then only one should be shown on the female-side. This hand may keep either a mirror, a flower or a parrot, and it should be adorned with *Keyūra*, *Kaṁkaṇa* and other feminine ornaments. On the left side there should also be the bosom of a woman with a round well-developed breast.

After this short description of the iconography, approaching the actual images, we see that this androgynous form of Siva has also enjoyed a reasonable popularity among the artists, painters and poets alike. If a survey about the most popular forms of Siva is made, there is no doubt that the image of Ardhanārīśvara may easily come in second place to that of Natarāja. The traces of it's early concept in Indian history are found from the age of the Kusanas. There are images reported from Kusana-period[1] which leave no doubt that 'the concept of Ardhanārīśvara was well thought and the image evolved, already in Kusana period'.[2]

A terracotta figure from Basarh belonging to the Gupta period, has also been published as an early model of this form.[3] After the Gupta period we find countless representations of Siva as Ardhanārīśvara from almost all over India. Some prominent ones have been brought to the light from time to time by many scholars and students of Hindu iconography.[4]

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[1] Agrawala, (V.S.), *A catalogue of the Brahamanical images in Mathura art*, U.P., Hist. Society, 1957, p. 28.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Banerji, (J.N.), Development of Hindu iconography, Calcutta, 1941, pp. 198-99.

[4] *Ibid.* See the following references on Ardhanārīśvara:
—Agrawal, (V.S.), *A cat. of the Brah. Images in Mathura art*, U.P. Hist. Soci. Lucknow, 1957, p. 28.
—Agrawala, (R.C.), *Sculptures from Abaneri (Raj.)*, Lalit Kala, No. 1-2, 1955-56, pp. 30-31.
—Rao Gopinath, (T.A.), *Hindu Iconography*, pt. 2-1, Delhi, 1968, pp. 237-38.
—Annigeri, (A.M.), *A guide to Badami, Dharwar*, 1960, pp. 27-28.
—Sivaramamurti, (C.), *Mahābalipuram*, Delhi, 1652. p. 13.
—Srinivasan, (P.R.), *Rare sculptures of the early Cola period*, Lalit Kala, No. 5, April 1959, p. 63.
—Sastri, (H.N.), *A guide to Elephanta*, Delhi, 1914, pp. 43-45.
—Bhattasali, (A.N.), *Icono. of Buddhist & Brahmanical sculptures in the Dacca Museum*, Dacca, 1929, pp. 160-63.

Poetic expressions on Siva as Ardhanārīśvara.

मन्दार माला
लुलितालकायै
कपाल मालांकित
शेखराय ।
दिव्याम्बरायै च
दिगम्बराय
नमः शिवायैः च
नमः शिवाय ॥

Salutations to Siva (*i.e.* Parvati) and Siva both who have a composite form as Ardhanārīśvara. To Siva whose hairlocks are decorated with mandara-flower garlands and to Siva who has garlands of skulls on his head, to Parvati who is wearing fine garments and to Siva whose garments are only the various directions.[1]

The salent points of iconographic interest in this verse are two separate marks of identity. Those familiar with the Ardhanārīśvara form may pick up these points at once when they read Parvati with flowery garlands on her head wearing fine garments on one hand and Siva with a skullcup on the head and having no garments at all, neither upper nor lower, on the other hand.

एकस्तनस्तुंगतरः परास्य
वार्तामिव प्रष्टुमगान्मुखाग्रम् ।
यस्याः प्रियार्धस्थितिमुद्वहन्त्याः
सा पातु वः पर्वतराजपुत्री ॥

May Parvati, half of whose form is made with her beloved Siva and the rest of whose form is shown having a singular projected breast as if wishing to know the whereabouts of the other missing one, protect you.[2]

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1. *Subhāṣita ratna Bhānāgāram*, p. 10:61.
2. *Ibid*, p. 10:162.

Here, the Ardhanārīśvara form is identified only with the protruding glory of the single breast of Parvati. It is a well-known fact that the first glance of any on-looker visitor or a student faced with the sculpture or a painting of Ardhanārīśvara, is directed at the strange but striking depiction of the single breast of Parvati. The same expression is met here as in the above verse from the anthology.

यस्योपवीत गुण एव
फणावृतैक

वक्षोरुहः कुच पटीयति
वाम भागे

तस्मैममास्तु तमसा
मवसान सीम्ने

चन्द्रार्धमौलि शिरसे
महसे नमस्या ।।

My salutations are to Siva, having the crescent on his head, which removes darkness, the Siva, in whose composite form the hood of the Naga is worn as a *vajnopavita* which fittingly acts as *kamcuki* to the single breast of Parvati.[1]

The translation may be somewhat complicated but the idea of the poet comes close to the actual representations of Siva-Ardhanārīśvara wearing *Nāgayajñopavīta*. Where the breast from the Parvati side is nicely shown covered with the serpent hood. The poet, with this fanciful rendering, which conforms to the inconographic details, hints at two interesting points concerning the *Kamcuka*. First that the fabric of the *Kamcuka* was of fine quality, and second its shape, after being worn, was similar to that of a serpent's hood. Some sculptures bearing this characteristic are found in the Bengala school of Pala and Sena art.[2]

स्वेदार्द्र वाम कुच
मंडन-पत्र-भंग

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1. *Subhasita ratna Bhandagram*, p. 11:163.
2. Sivaramamurti, (C.), *Ancient India*, No 6, plates.

संशोषि दक्षिण करांगुलि
भस्म-रेणुः ।
स्त्री पुं नपुंसक पद
व्यतिलंघिनी वः
शंभोस्तनुः सुखयतु
प्रकृतिश्चतुर्थी ।।

May the form (*tanuh*) of Siva, which grammatically can not be feminine, masculine or neutral, but makes a separate fourth type of its own, the form where the sandal-paste decorations of the left side breast, being wet because of amorous sweating, are casually made dry by the sprinkling of ashes from the right hand side fingers of Siva[1] be agreeable to your pleasure.

This may be taken as a fitting description of a pose where Siva's hand (*i.e.* right hand) is reaching nearer to the breast of Parvati (on the left side) in the Ardhanārīśvara pose.

संभोगानतिरिच्य मान विभवो
यदविप्रलम्भो रसः
तद्दिव्यं मिथुनं परस्पर परि-
स्यूतं नमस्कुर्महे ।
एकस्याः प्रतिविम्ब संभृत
विपर्या से मुहुर्दर्पणे,
सव्यांग स्थिति कौतुकं शमयति
स्वामी स यत्रापरः ।।

It is difficult indeed to translate the verse in it's literal form, but the sense as a whole is not too complicated to be grasped. The poet fancies that in this composite form of Siva, both the states of love (*Sṛṅgāra*) like union (*sambhoga*) and separation (*vipralaṁbha*) are nicely placed and complimentary to each other, Parvati's curiosity to look at Siva, is satisfied by looking into the mirror in her hand and Siva's curiosity is also appeased when he glances to the left.[2]

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1. *Subhasita*, p. 11:164.
2. *Ibid*, p. 11:165.

Here, it is the mirror in the hand of Parvati (an important attribute of her iconography in this form) which receives the main focus of poetic imagination. There are hardly any images of the Ardhanārīśvara where a mirror is not seen provided in the hand of Parvati.

अाश्लेषाधर विम्ब चुम्बन सुखा-
लाप स्मितान्यासतां,
दूरे तावदिदं मिथो न सुलभं
जातं मुखालोकनम् ।
इत्थं व्यर्थ कृतैक देह घटनो
पान्यासयोराव योः,
केयं प्रेम विडम्बनेत्यवतु वः,
स्मेरोर्धनारीश्वरः ।।

May Siva-Ardhanārīśvara protect you. Siva is rather shy and hesitant (smera) in his form of half man half woman in one. The usual love-sports like embraces, kisses and sweet chats or looking at one anothers' faces are all gone away. In his opinion this composite form of two in one is a great torture to their love and family life.[1]

The poet of the above composition in treating the god on a more simple, mortal, human plane visualizes the practical inconveniences in the love play of the couple. Treating Siva-Parvati in this way, enhances not only the charm of the poetry and it's meaning, but also the frankness and relaxation of the devotee who sees his god in every possible situation to which an ordinary human couple might be subject.

In the same sense of treating Siva and Parvati as human couples, another poet goes even further in creating humour out of the situation of the two united in one. The imaginative poet, recognizing the human aspect of the situation, finds a practical answer (which also creates humour) to the composite form of Siva. He thinks that Siva was so poor, that he could not afford to fill up the bellies of the

1. *Subhasita* p. 11:166.

two. So he preferred to unite in one body so that there would be only one belly to feed.[1]

In simple terms the statement was nothing more than what is stated by Pulina Bhatta[2] in the latter part of Kādambarī as:

देहद्वयार्धं घटना रचितं शरीरं।
एकं ययोरनुपलक्षित संधि भेदम् ।।

This is mom. But no, it can't be mom. She never had a rough red beard on half of her face.

This is pa. But no, it can't be pa. I never saw a breast on father's chest.

Who is this then; What is it; man or woman? Or can it be still something else ?

With such a doubt Guha having seen the form of Sambhu starts escaping back. May such a peculiar form of the god protect you.[3]

अम्वेयं ? नेयमम्वा, नहि खरकपिशं
स्मश्रु तस्या मुखार्धे,

तातोऽयं ? नैष तातः, स्तनमुरसि
पितुर्दृष्ट्वान्नाहमत्र ।

केयं ? कोऽयं ? किमेतद्युवतिरथ पुमान्
वस्तु किं स्यात्तृतीयं ।

शंभो संवीक्ष्य रूपादपसरति गुहः
शंकितः पातु युष्मान् ।।

× × ×

गौरी विभज्यमानार्धं संकीर्णे हर मूर्धनि ।
अम्व द्विगुण गंम्भीरे भागीरथि नमोऽस्तु ते ।।

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1. *Subhasita*, p. 11:17.
2. *Kadambari*, II. 1.
3. Ingalls, (H.H.), Anthology of Sanskrit court poetry, sec. 5/90.

Hail, mother Ganges that flows doubly deep on Hara's head, from it's being lessened by the half it gives to Gauri.

What is emphasized here, is the fact that in the androgynous form of Siva as Ardhanārīśvara the head dress is parted into two sections. On being that of Gaurī (Gaurī *vibhajyamānārdha saṁkīrne Hara-Mūrdhani* etc.) and the other being that of Hara. The poet fancies that before the uniting of the two heads Siva's head has more space. This is why the flow of Ganga looked thinner. Now the remaining half looks doubly occupied by the Ganges as there is hardly enough space left there. A careful look at the sculptural representations will make this point absolutely clear.

मिश्रीभूतां तव तनुलतां
विभ्रतौ गौरि कामम् ।
देवस्यासीदविरल परी
रम्भ जन्मा प्रमोदः ।
किंतु प्रेमस्तिमित मधुर
स्निग्ध मुग्धा न दृष्टिर्
दृष्टेत्यन्तः करमसक्त्ता
म्यति त्र्यम्बकस्य ॥

O Gauri ! the god's delight which wearing your slender body joined to his, have been surpassed as he receives your tight embraces might still be grieving at heart since he is no longer able to see your sweet, loving, innocent and love fixed glances.[1]

The fancy of the poet (leaving the divine grandeur of Siva aside for a while) thinks more in the terms of human love. The charm he tries to create lies in the expression that Siva being joined with his consort Parvati, once and forever, with the advantage of being ever so tightly embraced on one hand, encounters the disadvantage of not being able to glance at Parvati's loving smiles. So it is only partly good for him. The best expression of this type is noticed in the verse आश्लेषाधर विम्ब चुम्बन परः etc.

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1. Ingalls, (H.H.), Anthology of Sanskrit Court poetry, 5/82 (Ingalls) and 5/12 (Kosambi).

यदम्वा तातो वा
द्वयमिदमगादेक तनुताम् ।

तदर्धं चार्धं च
क्व नु गतम थार्यः कथयतु ।

जगन्तत्तज्जातं
सकल-नर-नारीमयमिति

प्रतीतिं कुर्वाणो
जयति शिखि भर्तुर्गजमुखः ।।

Kumāra asked his brother Ganeśa, "when father and mother became a single body, what happened to the remaining halves of each ?" Ganeśa said that the male half was born as a man and the female half as a woman on earth. Hail to Ganesa who solved the problem and convinced Kumāra.[1]

The above is a simple question which might be asked in similar mortal situations. The answer is also not unconvincing as it speaks well for the cosmic philosophy of the Saivagamas.

There are some rather dramatic verses in the anthological collections which comment about this androgynous form of Siva. One such, is the fancy where Kāma, the god of love, who is said to have been defeated (actually consumed) by Śamkara accuses Siva of being so fearful of the absence from his mistress and so much enslaved to love (*i.e. Kāma*) that he bears her in his very form.[2]

लोकाविष्कृति संक्षय स्थिति कृतां
यः कारणं वेधसाम्

ध्वस्त ध्वान्त चयः परास्त रजसा
ध्यायन्ति यं योगिन,

यस्यार्धं स्थित योषितोऽपि हृदये
नास्थायि चेतो भुवा

भूतात्मा त्रिपुरान्तकः स जयति
श्रेयः प्रसूतिर्भवः ।।

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1. Ingalls, (H.H.), Anthology of Sanskrit Court poetry, 5/85 (Ingalls) and 5/15 (Kosambi).
2. *Ibid*, 14/1 (Kosambi) and 323 (Ingalls), see also No. 326 for the similar expression.

Victory to Bhava, Bhūtāmā, the Tripurāntaka Siva who is the generator of well-being, who is the sole cause of the existence, creation and destruction of the universe, who is ever meditated upon by the medicants, whose heart is ever restrained even when half of it is occupied by a lady, his beloved Parvati.[1]

This verse is of a more serene and philosophic type in contrast to the more witty, fancyful and humorous verses we come across in later times, especially from the anthologies of Sanskrit court-poetry. What is remarkable here, is the reference it gives to Ardhanārīśvara at an early date in the Gupta period.

अच्छिन्न मेखलमलब्ध
दृढोपगूढं,

अप्राप्त चुम्बनमनीक्षित
वक्त्र-कान्ति,

कान्ताविमिश्र वपुष:
कृत विप्रलम्भ ।

सम्भोग सख्यमित
पातु वपु: पुरारे: ।।

May Purari (Siva) in his androgynous form where he has mixed his person with that of his beloved and has forced separation (*Vipralambha*) to be a close friend to union (*sainbhoga*) look after your welfare.[2]

The plain fact is that Siva, after combining his person with that of Parvati, left no opportunity for feelings of separation any more. Instead feelings of separation were joined together and united forever.

अर्धं दन्तच्छदस्य स्फुरति जपवशाद
धंमप्युत्प्रकोपाद्

एक: पाणि: प्रणन्तुं शिरसि कृतपद:
क्षेप्तुमन्यस्तमेव ।

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1. E.I. Vol. XIV, pp. 115 ff.
2. Sayana's *Subhāṣita-Sudhānidhi*, ed. Krishnamoorthy, (K.), Dharwar, 1968, p. 7:5 etc.

एकं ध्यानान्नि मील व्यपरम विकसद्
वीक्षते नेत्र मित्थं

तुल्यानिच्छाविधित्सा तनु खतु सवो
यस्य संध्या विधाने ।।

Half the lip (belonging to Siva) throbs in the mutterings of prayers and the other half (belonging to Parvati) throbs too, due to a growing anger (in the worship of Saṁdhyā her rival), one hand is raised to the head in obeisance, and the other to fling that away; one eye is closed in meditation and the other looks on without blossoming (pleasure); may the body of the Lord which does not look equal on any account at the time of the worship of evening twilight (Saṁdhyā) protect you all.

अर्धांगना पुं
वपुष: पुरारे:

मूर्ति श्रियं
नौखि वस्तनोतु ।

प्रेमातिभारादपरं
यदर्धं,

ममज्ज शृंगार
रसाम्बु राशौ ।।

May the form of Lord Siva whose body is half female and half male, bring prosperity to you, like a ship, one half of which is immersed in the sea of love by the great weight of affection.

उच्चित्राणि दिगम्बरस्य वसना
न्यर्धांगना स्वामिनो

रत्नालंकृतिभिर्विशेषितवपु:
शोभा शर्त सुभ्रुव: ।

पौराढ्यांश्चपुरी श्मशान वसते
भिक्षा भुजोस्याक्षयां

लक्ष्मीं स व्यतनो द्दरिद्र भरणे
सुज्ञो हि सेनान्वय: ।।

The king Vijayasena's offerings to the Siva temple are described in a way that illustrates many iconographic details of the deity as well.

The God has for his clothes, the sky (*Digaṁbara*, as he is) and he has now been provided with dresses of variegated colours. *He who was husband of only half a lady* (master of only an *ardhāṅganā*) has been given a hundred beautiful females whose charm of body is enhanced by the wearing of jewellery. His residence was the cremation ground, now he is provided with a *purī*-ful of *Pauras*. And he who subsisted on alms only, has been provided with a fortune.[1]

सन्ध्या ताण्डव सम्विधान विलसन्
नान्दी निनादोर्मिभि,

निम्मर्यादर सार्णवो दिशतु व:
श्रेयोऽर्धनारीश्वर: ।

यस्यार्धे ललितांगहार वलयै
रर्धे च भीमोद्भटै

नाट्यारम्भरयैर्ज्जयत्यभिनयै
द्वैधानुरोधश्रम: ।।

May Ardhanārīśvara, the movement in one half of whose body is produced by charming gesticulation (*lalitangaharavalanaih*) and in the other (*i.e.* the male part) are the terrible gesticulations (*Bhimodbhataih*) of the efforts of dancing; both crowning with success the labour of this two-fold play (*i.e.* performance of two opposite kinds of gesticulations at one and the same time); and who is, as it were, the limitless ocean of delight consisting of waves of Nandi song, unfolded in the performance of Siva's dance at the twilight of Destruction, bring prosperity unto you.[2]

Lalitāngahāra is one of the 108 sub-varieties of dramatic angahara's meaning gesticulation.

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1. Deopara Inscription of Vijayasena, *Inscriptions of Bengal*, Vol. III, p. 49.
2. Naihati (24 Pargana W.B.) copper plate of Vallalsena, *Inscriptions of Bengal*, Vol. III, p. 71.

The main point of the verse is that Siva as Ardhanārīśvara is also conceived as dancing, expressing two prominent gesticulations (angahāra's) by his two sides (female and male) of the same form.

सन्ध्यानतौ नर-पुरंध्रितनोः सरोषम
मुत्सारिते गिरिजया निज पाणिपद्मे
उत्सर्पि कंकण फणीन्द्र फणार्यणेन
पूर्णोञ्जलिर्जयति बाल मृंगाक मौलेः ॥

Siva in his half-male half-female form, praying to *sandhya* (the twilight) with his two hands folded together. The supporting (left) hand of Parvati, was taken away by her in jealous anger, but, in the meantime, the snake worn as kanka in Siva's hand came up and replaced (the missing arm) with his hood, so the angali could remain intact (*pūrṇa*) Hail to Siva in this form.

Interesting is the natural supposition of the poet remarking on Siva's Ardhanārīśvara form. In his imagination, Parvati, being a lady, could not stand to see her husband praying to another female (saṁdhyā) even when her own hand is employed in the praying. She took it away, but the fancy of the poet provided another substitute for it in form of the snake's hood.

So far, we have come across two marvellous fantasies in which the hood of Siva's snake is envolved. One of them is where the Nāga-yajñopavīta's nought covers the single breast of Parvati and acts as a *kamcuka* (brassiers) to it and the other one is here, where the hood of the snake acts as half of the anjali.

CHAPTER IV

VISNU AND HIS POPULAR INCARNATIONS AS WITNESSED BY THE VERSES FROM EPIGRAPHS

After Siva, the other most popular Hindu god is Visnu, who has formed the subject of many benedictory verses from inscriptions. Visnu who was only known as *Upendra* (*i.e.* next to Indra) during the early Vedic period, in the long run of religious history, became such a popular god that by the Gupta period he had easily superceded Indra and other Hindu divinities and acquired the name of *Atīndra*.[1] From the historical point of view, the references about the popular Vaiṣṇava cult and the incarnations (avatāra) of Vishnu go much earlier than in case of Siva or any other Hindu divinity for that matter. Speaking precisly, about the epigraphical material, we find that references to Visnu and his cult were made from as early as the second century B.C. A well known piece of evidence which is very often cited, comes from the region of Vidisa (M.P.) where a pillar with the inscription has been found. The contents of this inscription[2] praise Visnu as '*Deva-devas Vāsudevas*' which is sufficient to point out the supreme popularity of Visnu during that age. It becomes even more important as evidence when we know that these lines were recorded there, on the surface of a pillar called *Garudadhvaja*, by an Indo-Greek ambassador named Haliodorous.[3] In short, this was the period when basic concepts like *vyūhas* and *pancavīras* which gave place to the later-age *avatāras* of Visnu, were getting recognition.

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1. *Visnu-sahasranama*. Verse 30, Gorakhpur edition.
2. Heliodorous pillar inscription. Sircar, (D.C.), *Select Inscriptions*, p. 88.
3. For further discussions on this point and the importance of this discription, *see* : Ray Chondhury, (H.C.), *Materials on early history of Vaisnava Sect*, Calcutta, pp. 99ff.

Once recognized, they emerged with such an enormous force, that it dominated the entire sphere of the Hindu world, it's thought, culture, religion, mythology, art and literature. It is not strange, therefore, to note that more than 50% of the Indian niceties in art, architecture, religio-mythical or purely classical literature deal with the popular themes of Visnu and his various incarnations. As to the two great epics of Indian history, if one is totally devoted to *Ramāvatāra* of Visnu, the other is also not less coloured with the deeds and exploits of Krisna, the Visnu. In the same way the basic themes of the majority of *puranas* are also influenced by the ever surpassing myths, tales and stories of Visnu and his incarnations. In fact, the idea of avatara or incarnation brought such a great revolution in the field of Hindu belief that it never was surpassed. It inspired the whole society so vigorously that hardly any field remained unaffected with the popular cult of Visnu, Krisna or Rama stories.

Epigraphic records which were caused to be engraved or written on the instructions of the contemporary kings and nobles could not remain untouched by such popular themes. As a result, from second century B.C. until now, we come across a large number of benedictory verses from the inscriptions which are totally devoted to Visnu and his incarnations.

In the iconographic domain, Visnu, like Siva, has not only some peculiar forms to be depicted but also his more than ten incarnations, take up a good deal more space than that of Siva.

Realising the vastness of the field, it is not our aim here to continue narrating stories about all the iconographic representations of Visnu. What is aimed here, is to mark out some of the most popular forms and incarnations of Visnu, which also received an overwhelming popularity amongst the age-wide composers of epigraphical records.

Though the references about Visnu are received from an early date, yet the best compositions start coming more from Gupta-period onwards, wherein their classical styles many of the iconographic features of Visnu are found reflected. It is equally true in the field of art representations, where also most of the nice icons are found from the classical age of the Guptas.

Talking about benedictory verses from inscriptions, we follow our own order in dealing with the various incarnations of Visnu and not so much the order of the Puranas.

A quick glance over the vast field of epigraphs, reveals that there are more verses found in devotion to Visnu's forms like *Vāmana-Trivikrama*, *Ananta Śayana* and *Vārāha*. Here and there are found some verses devoted to his favourite form of *Laksmī-nārāyaṇa*, *Kriśna* and others. About his *Daśāvatāra* at a place, so far only one inscription has been noticed.

Vāmana-trivikrama. Though in the field of iconography and inscriptional verses as well, the *Vāmana* and *Trivikrama* forms are found representated rather separately, yet the incident after which Visnu assumed this form is one and the same. That is why we have thought of dealing then together.

Vāmana is the form of Visnu where he is shown as a short-statured Brahmin carrying a *Kamandalu* in one hand and wearing an umbrella over his head. The story about this form, which is found in many of the Puranas, says that once a *daitya*-king called Bali because of his good deeds, sacrifices and charities, because so popular and powerful that he rivaled the glory of god Indra, the king of the gods. Indra, feelings jealous of the ever growing fame and glory of Bali, tried his best to get the best of him but could not succeed by any means. Being disappointed in his efforts, he approached Lord Visnu for help in this matter. As a result Visnu assumed the form of a poor Vāmana and approached the palace of Bali as a beggar (*Bhikṣu*). Bali, who was ever famous for his *dāna* and charity, asked *Vāmana* what he desired. In the meantime, Bali's guru made out easily that the poor Vamana was not an ordinary beggar but the Lord Visnu himself, who most probably had come to cheat Bali and take his kingdom away. He warned Bali not to give Vāmana any words. Yet Bali, wanting to keep his word, did not listen to the advice of his guru and gave words of *dāna* to the disguished Vāmana. Once Vāmana was sure that Bali was not going to betray his promise, he aske only for control over that territory which he could cover in three steps. After acquiring Bali's consent, Vāmana enlarged his person in the form of Tri-vikrama who could cover the whole universe.

Based on this story, we find pictorial iconographic representations of two types. One is where Visnu is shown as Vāmana, begging Bali for three steps and the other is where he has assumed a heroic pose raising his upper leg in the sky and the lower one resting on earth, which symbolizes the entire span of the universe. Both these forms of Visnu have been equally popular with the artists and poets alike. A very good sloka on this theme comes from the Junagarh inscription from the time of Skandagupta,[1] which condences whole story.

श्रियमभिमत भोग्यां
नैक कालापनीतां

त्रिदशपति सुखार्थं
यो बलेराजहार ।

कमल निलयनाया:
शाश्वतं धाम लक्ष्म्या:

स जयति विजितार्तिर
विष्णुरत्यन्त जिष्णु: ।।

Most powerful, the conqueror of distress, Lord Visnu is victorious, who is the perpetual refuge of Laksmi and who for the happiness of Indra seized the goddess Laksmi back from Bali.

Another inscriptional record about this form of Visnu which speaks more about *Trivikrama* than *Vāmana*, is from the Nagpur stone inscription of the rulers of Malava.[2]

एक एव भुवन त्रयेऽपि स
श्रीपतिर्भवतु वो विभूतये ।

यस्य मध्यम पदश्रितोऽप्यमी
भास्कर प्रभृतयश्चकासति ।।

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1. Fleet, C.I.I., Vol. III, pp. 58 ff.
2. E.I. Vol. II, pp. 180-95.

May Laksmi's husband (Visnu), that sole lord of fortune in all the three worlds, grant you prosperity, he from whose *stride* even the sun and the other luminaries yonder, shines forth.

In the same context, there are two very nice verses from *Gathasaptasari*,[1] one describing the cleverness of Vāmana and the other praying for the third step of Trivikrama.

बलेर्वाचाबन्धे
आश्चर्यं निपुणत्वं च प्रकटयन्

सुरसार्थं कृतानन्दो
वामन रूपो हरिर्जयति ।।

Surprising Bali, after he was bound to his own vow and thus showing a great skill, may that Hari who made the gods feel happy, be victorious.

In another inscription, from Khajuraho from the time of Dhangadeva, some more curious facts about Vāmana-Trivikrama are given. Poet of the inscription goes into greater detail in his descriptions and says that after Bali was subdued and all the gods of the three worlds were taken aback with the Trivikrama form of Visnu, Brahma washed the feet of Visnu and collected the water in his *Kamandalu*. This water was later on known as that of Ganga who is kept by Siva on his head.

पायासु बलि वञ्चन व्यतिकरे
देवस्य विक्रान्तयः

सद्यो विस्मित देव दानव नुता
तिस्रस्त्रिलोकीं हरे ।

यासु ब्रह्म वितीर्णमर्धसलिलं
पादारविन्दच्युतं,

धत्तेऽद्यापि जगत्त्रयैक जनकः
पुण्यं समूर्न्धा हरः ।।

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1. *Gāthāsaptāsati*, 5:6; 5:11.

Ananta śayana Visnu. This is an independent form of Visnu, not related with any incarnation story. In this form he is shown lying on a couch of *Ananta-naga* in the middle of *Ksīra-sāgara.* Another name of this form is also called as *Śeṣaśāyī*. From the iconographic details of this form, we find god Visnu lying on a couch of Nāga in the middle of the sea, a lotus-stalk is shown, coming out from his navel and on the top of the lotus god Brahma is seated. Laksmi the wife of Visnu is shown seated at his side massaging his feet (*samvāhana*). In the background, two demons are seen, *Madhu and Kaitabha.* Images, based on such a simple scene, have enjoyed great popularity from the Gupta period on. A very well-known and often illustrated example of this form, comes from the Gupta temple of Deogarh.

Like the art representations, epigraphical verses are also found from the Gupta period onwards, which reflect on the iconographic details of this form. A pillar inscription from the time of Budhagupta found in Eran, presents a good example of this type.

जयति तिभुश्चतुर्भुजश्चतुरार्णव-
विपुल-सलिल पर्यंक:

जगत: स्थित्युत्पत्ति न्यायादि हेतु
गंरूड़ केतु: ।।

Victorious is the Lord Visnu, the four armed one, whose couch is in the broad water of the four oceans, who is the cause of continuity, creation and destruction of the universe, and who has the mark of Garuda on his banner.[1]

Another benedictory sloka about this form is the *Dudhapani* rock inscription from the reign of Udayamana[2] (8th cent. A.D.) where the poet, utilizes the glossy skin of Sesa to create a bit of fun.

श्रीरात्म देह प्रतिमा सहस्र-
मालोक्य भोगीन्द्र फणामणिस्थं

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1. E.I. Vol. I, pp. 137-47.
2. Fleet, C.I.I, 19, p. 88-90.

इर्ष्याकुलाकरतलेन हरेः प्रहार-
मुल्लासयन्ती भवतु श्रिये वः ।।

Laksmi having seen in the gems of the hoods of Sesa, her own image, a thousand times, became envious of Hari and kicked him with her feet. May that Laksmi be good to your prosperity.

It is interesting to note here, that the invocation in the verse is made more directly to Laksmi than Visnu, which according to some[1] was due to the fact that the donor of the grant was a merchant. But one other possible reason for the growing popularity of Śeṣaśāyī and his particular mention within Laksmi's invocation may be the fact that, like Laksmi, sesa took part in the *samvāhana* (massage) of Visnu's feet, Rajya Laksmi (the royal sovereignty) may also attend at the feet of the virtuous king.

Just as Laksmi was praised in the above verse, so, in another benedictory sloka from the Jabalpur copper plate from the time of Yasahkarnadeva[2] (1122 A.D.), we find god Brahma as the object of the invocation. The interesting point in all these invocations, is that they were all made in connection with Visnu's Śeṣa-Śāyī form, emphasizing one or another feature of his iconography. For example, in the above cited sloka if it was Sesa, who forms the couch of Visnu and Laksmi, who is pointed out. In the following sloka, the navel of Visnu, with a lotus stalk on which Brahma is seated is focused upon :

जयति जलजनाभस्तस्य नाभी सरोजं ।
जयति जयति तस्माज्जातवानब्ज सूतिः ।।

Glorious is the god whose navel is a lotus, glorious is the lotus which is his navel and glorious is the god born from that lotus.

There are two basic points of iconographic interest which are brought into light here. One is, that from Visnu's navel comes out the lotus and the other is that on the same lotus god Brahmā is seated.

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1. E.I. Vol. II, pp. 343-47.
2. Kielhorn, E.I. Vol. II, p. 344.

An even more witty sloka on this point comes from the Govindpur inscription of poet Gangadhara[1] (1125 A.D.).

एकत्रोन्नत गात्र गौरव भरात्
प्राप्ते तथा नम्रताम् ।
अन्यत्र श्रियमुद्वहत्यतिलघुं
तुंगे भुजंगेश्वरे ।
वक्षः सन्मुख सम्भृतस्तन तटी
सगोपसर्पत्सुखं
निद्राणोत्र दयां दधातु दयिता-
माश्लिष्य विश्वम्भरः ।।

May the supporter of the universe (Visvambhara) bestow on us his compassion he who, embracing his beloved and thrilled with delight by the close contact of his breast with her bosom, is sleeping on the lord of serpents, who on one side is bent low by the weight of the god's lofty body, while on the other remains upright under the very light burden of the goddess of fortune.

Like Laksmi's and Brahma's invocation in connection with this form of Visnu, in a benedictory sloka from Ratanpur stone inscription of Prithvideva II (1163 A.D.)[2] we also get an invocation to Sesa on whose couch Visnu is sleeping.

यत्क्रोडे जठरैक कोटर कुट
विश्रान्त विश्वश्चिरं
लक्ष्मीपाणि सरोज लालित पदो
निद्राति नारायणः ।
किंचानेक फणा मणि व्यतिकरै-
रलाकरत्वं दधौ
अम्भोधिर्विदधातु शर्म्मं जगतां
शेषः स भोगीश्वरः ।।

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1. E.I. Vol. II, pp. 1-7.
2. E.I. Vol. II, pp. 330-42. According to the editor (Prof. Kielhorn) of this inscription there are two verses from the poet Gangādhara found in *Sadūkti Karṇāmrita* which are also included in Peterson's edition of Vallabhadeva's *Subhāṣitāvalī*. (Introduction, p. 32).

May that lord of serpents Śesa, grant happiness to the world! (he) on whose lap made from the unique cottage formed by the cavity in his belly, there sleeps Narayan with whom rests the universe and whose feet are caressed by the lotus like hands of Laksmi, and on account of the precious stones in whose hoods the ocean came to be the store of jewels.

Remarkable in this sloka is the natural description of the hoods of Śesa, which are a little raised up and again bent downwards from the top, making a real cottage (*Kotara-Kūtī*) like space for Visnu to sleep at ease. The description is very much in accordance with the actual representations of Śesa and his hoods in art.

Varāhāvatara of Visnu. This form of Visnu is related to his incarnation as a Boar. The popular myth of this form is found Varāha and Bhagawat in the Puranas. An asura called Sankhasura, who was living under the waters of the sea, had once stolen the Earth. It caused great pain to the gods in heaven and the human beings. There was no one who could dive deep enough to kill the asura and restore the Earth back. Therefore feeling helpless, all the creatures prayed to Lord Visnu to restore the Earth back. Visnu, being moved by the troubles of the human beings, took the form of a Boar and dived deeply into the waters of the sea. After a long battle, the asura was killed and the Earth was restored to it's present position. After killing the asura, Visnu lifted the Earth up on his tusk and replaced normal life on it.

As a result, in the iconographic presentations of this form, Visnu is shown emerging out from waters in the form of a Boar. On his tusk is shown goddess Earth in her anthropomorphic form. In the upper part of the panel are shown various gods and goddesses and in the background are Nagas and Nagis. Sometimes even Sagara in his human form is shown in the background as in the famous Gupta period panel of Udayagiri.

Following Trivikrama, Varāha is the second well known form of Visnu in which his physical prowess plays an important role. In the visual depictions he is shown standing erect like a solid pillar, keeping

Earth on his tusk. After the further development of vaisnava iconography we get more than three main types of Varāha images. First of all he is shown as *Mahā-Varāha* or *Ādi-Varāha* then as a *Nri-Varāha* with the body of a man and face of a boar, and finally as *Yajna-Varāha*.

As far as iconography is concerned, these three forms do differ in appearance somewhat, however, very few of these distinctions are noted in the literary invocations.

Benedictory verses about Varāha are not so numerous as the actual images. Below, two representative verses from inscriptions are cited which reflect on the iconography of this form.

जयति धरण्युद् धरणे
घन घोणाघात घूर्णित महीध्रः
देवो वराह मूर्तिस्त्रैलोक्य
महागृहस्तम्भः ।।

Victorious is the god Visnu, who has the form of a Boar, who, in the act of lifting up the earth, caused the mountains to tremble with the blasts of his hard snout and who is the pillar of the great-house which is the three worlds.[1]

अम्वरमानस्तम्भः कुम्भः संसारवीज-रक्षायाः ।
हरिदन्तरमित मूर्तिः क्रीडा पोत्री हरिर्जयति ।।

May Hari, the measuring rod of space, pitcher for preservation of seed in the shape of Universe; having a frame extending up to the ends of the four quarters and assuming sportively the form of a boar; be victorious.[2]

Laksmī-Nārāyana form of Visnu. Like the Umā-Maheśvara form of Siva, where the divine couple is shown together, Visnu is shown also in the form of Laksmī-Nārāyana. Though in the examples of Umā-Maheśvara, (in many of the forms of Siva) Uma is found

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1. E.I. Vol. XXVI, pp. 255-63.
2. Eran Stone boar ins. of Tormana, C.I.I. No 36, p. 159.

present, this is not the case with Visnu. In Visnu's forms, with the exception of Laksmi-Narayana one finds Laksmī's presence only in the Ananta sayana form. In some cases, this form of Visnu has almost all the features of Umā-Maheśvara type, the two are not only identical in their iconographic presentations but also in their benedictory invocations. Poetic compositions about Laksmī-Nārāyana are as gay and lively as those about Umā-Maheśvara. Two beautiful examples from epigraphs, cited below, can make the statement clear.

गाढ़ोपगूढ़ कमला कुच कुम्भपत्र
मुद्रांकितेन वपुषा परिरिप्समानः ।
मा तुल्यतामभिनवा वनमालिकेति
वाग्देवतोपहसितोऽस्तु हरिः श्रिये वः ॥

May Hari bring prosperity to you, Hari, who with his body marked with srivatsa, embracing Laksmi, was taunted by the speech of the goddess, saying 'O Lord, do not spoil thy fresh garland'.[1]

देवि प्रातरवेहि नन्दनवानात्
मन्दः कदम्वानिलो
वाति व्यस्तकरः शशीति कृतके
नालाप्य कौतूहली ।
तत्काल स्खलदंगभंगिम चला-
मालिंग्य लक्ष्मीं वलाद्,
आलोलानन बिम्ब चुम्बन परः
प्रीणातु दामोदरः ॥

"Oh ! goddess, know it to be morning the gentle breeze (carrying the fragrance) of the Kadamba flower blows from the Nandana forest and the Moon has lost it's beams", having thus with eagerness and in an affected manner addressed her, (the god) Damodara forcibly embraced Laksmi whose limbs were unsteady at that moment and who was in a helpless and disturbed condition. May that Damodara be pleased.[2]

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1. E.I. Vol. II, pp. 347-54.
2. Bhuvanesvara ins. of Bhatta Bhava Deva. *Inscriptions of Bengal*, Vol. III, p. 32.

Daśāvatāra panels of Visnu. Visnu has ten incarnations in all. Some of them we have already discussed above. Many of the remaining *avatāras*, which could have become the theme of independent presentations, were treated together. This was the case with both the artists and the poets. As a result, there are many *Daśāvatāra* panels on the outside niches of Vaisnava temples. Likewise, from literature and epigraphic records we get Daśāvatāra stotras or benedictory verses where most of the incarnations of Visnu are described. In literature, a very famous stotra, known as *Daśāvatāra stotram*, has been contributed by a celebrated Bengali poet Jayadeva.

The only example we could gather from epigraphy is found from the Ajayagarh stone inscription of Nana, where Visnu's Fish, Tortoise, Boar, Nrisimha, Vāmana, Paraśurāma, Rāma and Krisna incarnations are invocated. The description of these incarnations takes up more than ten verses.[1]

प्राय: प्रौठेन्दिरायाः प्रचुरतर सुखा-
श्लेषमक्लेश कायो

विभ्रत्विभ्रान्त दृष्टिद्रुत चकित रतो-
त्कीर्ण पूर्णानुरागः ।

उद्यच्द्रीवत्स दीपद्युति रभस रसो-
ल्लासितानंग हेति-

देव: श्री विश्वमूर्तिर्दिति तनय रिपु-
र्विभ्रमं वो विभर्तु ॥

1. May Deva (Visnu), the preserver, the enemy of the sons of Diti (Asuras), afford you joy, he who generally does not feel physical weariness, being in the constant happy embrace of bold Laksmi and who signifies amazingly consummate love (for the consort) with his restless rolling eyes intoxicated with delight and whose *srivatsa* (breast-jewel) shines like cupid's arrows shot by the expanded bow with it's blazing rays.

पिण्याकपिण्डमित चण्डरूचिग्मुर्युरारि
गोवर्धनाचलमलं कृतवान् कराग्रे ।

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[1] Chittagong copper plate of Damodara, p. 58ff.

प्रेमोत्कवल्ल रजनी जनिताद्भुत श्री
श्रेयांसि वो दिशतु गोगण दृश्यमानः ।।

2. May Murari (*i.e.* the enemy of Mura) of ardent beauty, bless you, he who, while being looked upon by his herd of cows, held upon the tip of his hand the mount Govardhana like a lump of mustard cake, and whose wonderous lustre was enhanced by the love sticken wives of the cowherds.

श्री स्वेद नर्म ललितं विदधद्हरिर्वो
गोपी कठोर कुच कुंठित शायक श्रीः ।
कामातुरान्तर कुरंग वधू विलासा-
न्त्रुन्धन्कुतूहलतया धियमातनोतु ।।

3. May Hari who is as if in pleasant sport thwarting in jest the diversions of the licentious deer with their consorts by an (array) of arrows, whose beauty has been blunted by the stiff breasts of the milk maids, enhance your knowledge.

मज्जत्समुज्ज्वलतनुर्भव भार भेदी,
यो वेदवृन्दमुदं धाविद मुज्ज्हार ।
शंखा सुराशु हरणः किल मीन रूपी,
देवश्रियः पतिरघं भवतां विहन्तु ।।

4. May Deva, the fish transformed husband of Sri (Laksmi), the restorer of the set of the Vedas buried in the ocean, the resplendent, the destroyer of the burdens of the world and the slayer of Sankhasura, destroy your sins.

संवर्त विन्यस्त तटे जलानां……
रेमे निधौ यः खलु योग युक्त्या ।
जगद्गतिः संस्थित चिद्रुचि श्रीः
स वो विभूतिं कमठः करोतु ।।

5. May the tortoise, who revelled in abstract in the watery ocean with it's shores destroyed by the Samvarta (one of the seven clouds at the dissolution of the universe), the refuge of the world constant in shining beauty, cause you to prosper.

क्रोडी कृत्य विशाल निष्ठुर तरां दन्तान्वहन्वुद्वहो
मूर्ति विस्तृत धर्म कर्म नियतिर्वासो धियां माधवः ।
ग्रौग्रार्तिंपडित पंक पेशल रूंचि विश्वम्भरामुदधे
शं तो वर्धयतां स विश्व वसतिर्नित्याधिनाशोदितः ।।

6. May Madhava (in the form of a boar) who, by the mighty thrust of his long, cruel tusks which delivered up the earth in the shape of a muddy lump of clay and who extended the fixed order of the religion and duty, the abode of intelligence and the habitat of the universe, and who is ever ready to destroy mental agonies, increase your blessing.

सुमेरू श्रृंगाग्र निविष्ट रश्मे,
सहस्र भानोः श्रियमादधानः ।
सुदान वप्रोतुनितैः कराग्रैः
स वो नृसिंहो दुरितं भिनत्तु ।।

7. May Nrisimha (resplendent like the rays of a thousand suns) resting on the tip of the peak of the Sumeru and appearing with drawn nails for the destruction of the demon (Hiranyakasipu), take away your sins.

शुक्राक्षि विक्षेपमिषाद्रिपूणां
विरूपयन्नीतिमिवामिताभः ।
बलि प्रमादोद्भव वर्धमानः
स वामनो वोऽभ्युदयं ददातु ।।

8. May Vamana (dwarf) of matchless glory, bless you, he who, by the pretext of smashing the eye of Sukra, dencunced the very statemanship of his enemies, and who expanded himself in proportion to the arrogance and haughtiness of Bali.

द्विजकरेक्षितिमक्षतशासनो,
दधदनुद्धव क्रुद्रिपुयोषिताम् ।
जययशो भवनं जयति प्रधीः,
स परशुः किल राम इति श्रुतः ।।

9. Victorious be that renowned Parasurama of great intelligence, the abode of victory and fame, who placed the earth in the hands of the Brahmanas after acquiring it's governance, and who made the wives of enemies sad.

समुन्नतिर्यस्य पराक्रमाणां,
महावने पुण्यजनोपहारी ।
प्रमोदजालन्तनुते वहूती,
कुतो विपद्भ्यः स धिनोतु रामः ॥

10. May Rama, too, the slayer of demons, whose deeds of valour gladden the hearts of magnanimous people and serve as the protection of the body, save you from all miseries.

Harihara form of Visnu. In the field of Hindu iconography there is one more androgynouse form (similar to the Andhanārīśvara form of Siva) in which two prominent Hindu divinities are shown in one and the same image. This form is called Hari (*i.e.* Visnu) and Hara (*i.e.* Siva). According to scholars, it is the outcome of religious harmony between the two sects of Vaisnavites and Saivites.

The benedictory verses about these forms are more often found in the concluding parts of the inscriptions than the beginning parts.

Two remarkable verses which comment on the Hari-hara form are gathered here from the Gupta period which is also a time of popularity for such icons in the field of visual arts. The first sloka about the Harihara form of Visnu and Siva comes from the Mandasor inscription from the time of Kumara Gupta I and Bandhuvarman.[1]

अमलिन शशिलेखा दन्तुरं पिंगलानां,
परिवहति समूहं यावदीशो जटानां ।
विकच कमलमालामंस सक्तां च शार्गीं,
भवदमिदमुदारं शाश्वतं तावदस्तु ॥

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[1] E.I. Vol. XXVIII, pp. 100-101.

Another sloka on the same theme comes from the Gwalior stone inscription of Mihirakula[1] (*C*. 515-45 A.D.).

यावच्छर्वजटा कलाप गहने विद्योतते चन्द्रमा
दिव्यस्त्रीचरणैर्विभूषितं तटोयावच्चमेरुर्नगः ।
यावच्चोरसि नील-नीरद-निभे विश्णुर्विभत्युज्ज्वलां,
श्रींस्तावद्गिरिमूर्ध्नितिष्ठतु शिला-प्रासाद मुख्यो रसे ।।

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[1] Fleet, C.I.I., Vol. III, pp. 83-87.

CHAPTER V

POETIC-FANCIES ON PARALLELS AND OTHER ASPECTS OF HINDU ICONOGRAPHY

Long ago, in the journal of the Asiatic society Mr. Sivaramamurti has published a pioneering paper on the Parallels and opposites in India iconography.[1] In this paper he has very nicely drawn the striking parallels and opposites behind the conception of different forms of deity that constitute the elaborate text of Indian iconography. According to him the basic concept of parallels and opposites 'give us a picture of the working of human mind, of how no one set of followers of a particular faith of deity there of is satisfied with its own number of divisions or forms of representation till it has a parallel or an opposite of one form or other to correspond to or exceed the number in an opposite faith, and how when there is a deficiency it is sought to be made up by the creation of new forms or enlarging the scope giving a wider interpretation to existing ideas for embracing the concept that is found lacking. When it is studied in this light it appears as if a regular balance is kept up so that no one's faith may suffer at the expense of another'.[2] In short, this is what we mean when we talk about parallels and opposites in Indian iconography. Mr. Sivaramamurti has very ably brought this point home through illustrations. What one wishes more from him is the fact if all the examples he has taken as a model would have been arranged in a systematic order with a little-bit more comprehension; though after considering the vast field he has covered, it seems rather an impossible task. What would subsequently have been added to each and every form—as he has very well tried to do here and there, is to illustrate the forms also from the literary side. It was not only the peculiar mind of the artist working on icons which felt curious in designing or making so many parallels and opposite forms of a deity—or if we go a little deeper, the mind of the mythologists who in the first hand conceived and brought so many ideas forward, but also the ever curious and fanciful brain of poets who contributed so many verses on the subject.

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[1] Sivaramamurti, (C.)—*Journal of the Asiatic Society Letters*, Vol. XXI, No. 2, 1955, p. 77.

[2] *Ibid*.

From the Sanskrit anthological collections, particularly under their —maṅgalācaraṇa-prakaraṇas—there are found so many interesting ślokas illustrating the same idea of parallelism etc. A close look into such verses from iconographic point of view may not be a superfluous endeavour nor even the repetition of Mr. Sivaramamurti's work. It may rather prove a complimentary attempt in the same line. Here, once more we would like to say that our discussion is confined to Siva and Visnu and there too more with their parallel forms.

Coming direct to the verses on parallels in the iconography of Siva and Visnu we find ślokas composed under Āśirvacana style generally called as *Līlā-saṁlāpa* between Parvati and Laksmi, the consorts of the two gods. These verses of *Līlā-saṁlāpas*, if taken purely on literary merits, provide us a good humour, a pun on the double meaning of the words and also unique charm as they are always found in a question answer form. They are satirical in their tone no doubt but the satire is of very high quality. Since there is no satire or a joke which pinches one's heart in these ślokas, they are aptly termed as *Līlā-saṁlāpa*, for they amuse the listener because of their wit. Again if these verses are considered for their charm they add, on the cost of mythological stories, therefore, also reflect on iconographic forms; they are even marvellous. Though having a very close link with the iconographic form based on mythological stories from Puranas etc., their nature of parting information is entirely different than that of Dhyāna verses from Śilpaśāstras. In Dhyāna verses, what we find is the instruction given through the matters of factness whereas in the Līlā-saṁlāpa verses it is a running commentary on a particular form of a deity combined with a hear-felt appreciation from the side of its composer. The poet of these verses never takes himself so high on the pedastals of a *Śilpācārya* to preach or instruct but rather remains as a close devotee of his imporțal gods. He hardly hesitates in his fancies to enumerate many of the mortal demerits or natural weakness even in his immortal gods' character, divinity or the family life.

The said '*Līlā-saṁlāpas* or the humerous and witty conversations between Parvati and Laksmi display a good deal of sarcastic remarks an the exploits and forms of the two divinities but in such a chaste and literary way that one feels bound to be amused. This conversation, as we shall see in the following few verses, is always opened by Laksmi. The poets of these verses have termed them sometimes as *saṁbhāṣaṇa*, (conversation), as *Vāgbhaṅgayah* (sarcastic speeches) or Līlā-saṁlāpas (sporting-chats) etc., but the overall spirit of the theme is always sportive touching either this or that form of Siva or Visnu.

About the authorship of these verses, we regret that hardly anything is found. Even the author index given at the end of many sanskrit anthologies is absolutely silent on this point. At the most what one can say about these verses is their age-old popularity amongst the traditional pandits. In north-India, even today there are pandits who remember many such verses by heart without having any knowledge about the name of the poet or for that matter even an access to any good collection of sanskrit *subhāṣitas*. In fact, these verses pass through teacher to the taught or from a pandit to pandit. It seems, at a time when Hindu iconography and its sculptural representation reached to its highest point and covered not only the big and famous centres of pilgrimage and of the city temples of the kings but also the remote corners of the country-side village-temples; in the field of popular sanskrit poetry, these type of semi-devotional verses were composed. In due course of time they would have enjoyed an overwhelming popularity as they stood all the way apart from stereo-typed *Dhyāna* verses on one hand and some too much devotional *stuti* and stotra verses on the other. They were liked by the elites, pandits and common devotees as well because of their peculiar style and the mode of dealing with gods. They really helped one to fill-up the unbridgeable gap between himself and his immortal god. The poet and the audience he addresed to, were all the people facing day to day problems of a house-holder (*gṛhastha*) and when with the help of fancy (based on mythical background) something interesting was thought likewise in the terms of their gods—also, it attracted the masses more than anything else.

A. *Verses on Parallels of Siva and Visnu*

1. भिक्षार्थी स क्व यात: ? सुतनु बलि मखे
ताण्डवं क्वाद्य भद्रे ? मन्ये वृन्दा वनान्ते ।
क्व नु स मृग शिशु: ?
नैव जाने वराहम् ।
बाले ! कच्चिन्न दृष्टो जरढ वृष पति: ?
गोप एवास्य वेत्ता
लीला संलाप इत्थं जलनिधि हिमवत्कन्य योस्त्रायतां व: ।।

1. Laksmi—Where is gone that beggar ?
Parvati—Probably in the sacrifice of king Bali.
Laksmi—Dear one, where is Tāṇḍava-dance today ?
Parvati—Might be in the interiors of Vrindāvana.
Laksmi—Where is your that animal-faced baby (Ganesa) ?
Parvati—I have never known any one as your Varāha—the boar.
Laksmi—I do not see that master of old bull !
Parvati—Only Gopālaka may know its whereabouts.

Such a tactful and sportive conversation between the daughter of Sea and Himalaya may protect you.[1]

Again Laksmi says to Parvati :

2. भिक्षु: क्वास्ति ? बलेर्मखे
पशुपति: ? किं नास्त्यसौ गोकुले
मुग्धे पन्नग-भूषण: ? सखि ! सदा शेते च तस्योपरि ।

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[1] *Subasitaratnabhāṇḍāgāram*, p. 13/47.

आर्ये ! मुञ्च विषादमाशु
कमले नाहं प्रकृत्याचला
चेत्थं वै गिरिजा समुद्रसुतयोः संभाषणं पातु वः ।।

2. L.—Where is that beggar ?

P.—Might be in Bali's sacrifice.

L.—I mean that Paśupati !

P.—Is he not in Gokula ?

L.—O ! innocent one ! I am asking that who has snakes as ornaments.

P.—My dear ! he always sleeps on the couch of snake.

L.—O, noble lady ! (do not be sad) rather leave that poison-eater as quickly as you can.

P.—Kamalā (name of Laksmi) ! I am a stable-minded Parvati and not a fickle-minded one like you.

May this interesting conversation between Laksmi and Parvati protect you ![1]

The same idea is repeated in the following verse also.

3. हे गंगाधर-पत्नि ! चक्रिवधु किम् ?
कुत्रास्त्यसौ नर्तको ?
वृन्दारण्य भुवि
क्व सर्प कुतुकी ?
स्यात् कालियस्य ह्रदे
भिक्षुः कुत्र गतोऽस्ति ?
यज्ञ सदने
क्वासौ विषादी ?
बकी क्रोडेस्यादिति-
पद्मजा गिरिजयोः वाग्भंगयः पान्तु वः ।।

3. L.—O ! The wife of Gangādhara.

P.—Yes, madam, the wife of a Cakrī (the rogue, a juggler).

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[1] *Subasitaratnabhāḍagaram*, p. 13/42.

L.—Where is that dancer of yours ?

P.—Is he not in Vrindāraṇya ?

L.—Where is that one—who is always fond of *sarpas* (snakes) ?

P.—Might be trapping a snake in Kāliya-daha.

L.--Where did that beggar go ?

P.—Went to the sacrificial chamber (of Bali).

L.—And where is that poison-eater ?

P.—Should be in the lap of Bakāsura's wife.

Such a conversation of a teasing-tone between Girija and Laksmi may protect you ![1]

In the series of this type of verses though exactly not on the same context but still affiliated to it, we get a wonderful sloka, where the conversational smartness of Laksmi and Parvati is on its climax. This time it is Parvati who opens the talk.

4. लोले ! ब्रूहि कपाल कामिनि ?
पिता कस्ते ? पतिः पाथसां
कः प्रत्येति जलादपत्य जननं ?
प्रत्येति यः प्रस्तरात्
इत्थं पर्वतराज सिन्धु सुतयोराकर्ण्य वाक्चातुरी
संस्मेरस्य हरेर्हरस्य च मुदो निघ्नन्तु विधन्तु वः ॥

4. P.—O ! fickle-minded Laksmi !

L.—Halo dear, the wife of Kapāli.

P.—Who is your father ?

L.—My father is the master of water.

P.—But who will believe that a lady like you, may be the issue of waters ?

L.—Dear, those who believe that an issue may be born out of a stone will certainly do it.

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[1] *Subasitaratnabhāṇḍāgaram*, p. 13/43.

May the smiling faces of Hari and Hara after hearing this conversation of Parvati and Lakshmi remove all your troubles.[1]

After going through the above cited verses and noting down their contents what we find as a mark of iconographic interest-reflecting on the parallel-forms of Siva and Visnu, may be summarised as follows :

1. *Bhiksu-form :*—From Puranic stories which also work as a base for so many iconographic forms and features, we know that it is not Visnu as Vāmana only, who took a form of a beggar when he went to ask for three-step-wide earth from Daitya king Bali in his sacrificial chamber; but Siva also took this form and went out as a beggar before wives of the saints. These two stories having parallel notes each other have been invariably utilised in the field of art. Based on this story came out the Vāmana form of Visnu (as we have discussed earlier) and Bhiksatana forms of Siva. It is, therefore, if Laksmi asks Parvati that where is your Bhiksu ?—Parvati in her answer has not to deny that her husband Siva is not a Bhiksu—but what she says instead, very smartly, is something which accuses Laksmi also because her husband Visnu too has been a beggar. Talking in general mortal terms, one may say from the side of Parvati to Laksmi that when your own husband is a beggar what face you have got to taunt at me. But here, the most silent feature of the verse to which the sole credit goes to its composer, is the idea of gathering two similar incidents from the exploits of the two gods and utilizing them through the most witty conversations of their wives.

A point here about the art representations of Siva in his Bhikṣātana and Visnu as Vāmana may not be out of place as the frequency of the images of one and non-frequency of the other lead to the conclusion of their being predecessor or a successor in the realm of thought at least. As we see, the Bhiksātana murti of Siva if compared with the Vāmana Visnu are much lesser in number.[2] We may easily conclude that most probably it would have been Vaisnavites—who took a lead in this concept and later on it was followed by the Saivites. This is true at least in the field of art-representations. In literature it is a bit difficult to make any judgement as there are plenty of verses found for Vāmana and Siva both, illuminating the theme in parallels. May be the number of verses on Siva—as beggar exceed to that from Visnu to some extent, still the historicity of references stands more in favour of Visnu in this regard.

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[1] *Subasitaratnabhāṇḍāgāram*, p. 14/9.

[2] See Sivaramamurti, *Journal of the Asiatic Society Letters*, 1955, XXI, p. 83, pl. big 19. In fact Bhikshatana-murtis of Siva are generally found from South and that too of a very late date.

2. *Paśupati*—The next question of Laksmi to Parvati is asking her about Paśupati—*i.e.* Siva. On a humanitarian mortal plane, it may be taken again a remark denigrating the personality of Siva who has a company of animals (paśu) around. The skilful answer of Parvati to this remark is that as far as she knows the only Paśupati—is Gopāla—who enjoys dwelling in Gokula. It is not Siva only who is Paśupati but Visnu as Krishna also who is invariably known as *Gopāla*, *Govinda* and *Gopaveṣa*,[1] *paśupāngaja*[2] etc.

Like art forms which derive the theme from puranas and show Siva as a Paśupati and Krisna as Gopala and present a case of parallel between the two gods, poets do develop their fancies on the same theme and re-confirm the idea once more.

3. *Nartaka form*—The other point of common interest is that Siva and Visnu (Krisna) both have been known for their dances. Siva as Nateśa or Natarāja performing Tāṇḍava-nrittya—and Krisna as sometimes Bālakrisna or as a Rāsa-Bihāri—dancing amongst the Gopis inside Vrindāvana. So when Laksmi asks Parvati about Siva as where is that Nartaka ?[3] Parvati returns the taunt in the same tune with a remark—that he (*i.e.* not Siva, but your Krisna) should

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[1] Cf. Kalidasa's Meghadutam II as *Gopavesasya-Visnoh* etc.

[2] In a prārthanā-stotra of Bhāgwat Purana (10.14.1) Krisna-Visnu is prayed by Brahmā as *Laksmaśriye mridupade Paśupāngajāya*.

[3] Noteworthy are the names cited above including this one, as referred in the fore-mentioned slokas. For example, Bhikshu which is a name of *Vāmana Visnu* and Siva, in its simple meaning, is also denigrating remark against them and likewise Paśupati and Nartaka have not only double sense but a tone as well.

be dancing somewhere inside Vrindā garden. The illustrations of this theme are very appropriately dealt with in the article of Mr. Sivaramamurti.[1]

4. *Pannaga-bhūṣaṇa*—Other common name given in the forecited verses to Siva and Visnu is Pannaga-bhūṣaṇa– as both the gods somehow or the other have a link, attachment or a liking for snakes (Pannaga). We have already discussed Siva's snakes above where he is said as having snakes in his neck, arms etc. As regards Visnu—a casual reference is also made to his Nāga (Ananta) couch. As a simple fact these are the points which bring them parallel to each other. Of course in this case, Siva has more a closer link with snakes, than Visnu who only sleeps on it but never carries it as an attribute. Sivas' yajñopavīta also is made of Naga.[2]

Besides there are some other curious facts noticed from the above verses, which of course, do not speak much on the parallel forms of myths and thereafter in manifestations of Siva and Visnu, but do exhibit some good examples of *Vakrokti*. Laksmi addressing Parvati as a *Gangādhara-patni* is one of such examples. Here contrary to the expectations of the reader Laksmi is called as *Cakri-vadhu*, meaning the wife of a juggler a rogue and not as a *Prithvīdhara-patni* which would have been more appropriate an answer, as the two parallel forms of Siva—as Gangādhara—and Visnu as Prithvīdhara (in his Varāha form) also witness it. It seems, at least in the realm of poetry, that Visnu-Varāha, holding Prithvī on his tusk, did not inspire the poets so much to take Prithvī as a co-wife to Visnu as it did in case of Gangā resting on Siva's hair-locks. The reason may be that in the mythological stories and hence in the iconographic forms also Visnu has always been recognised with his two consorts. Therefore, nothing illegitimate (if we are permitted to say it) was seen in the incident where he (Visnu) is holding Prithvī—on his tusks. But in case of Siva it was taken as a big surprise and Gangā was never admitted as a co-wife to Siva. As a result a large number of mangala-slokas are found on the theme where Siva is repeatedly questioned by Parvati about Ganga.

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[1] See J.A.S.L. 1955, Vol. XXI, pl. VIII, figs. 21 & 22.

[2] For Further details see chapter III on Ardhanārīśvara and the verses cited therein. Kalidasa's statement (Ku. V.) about Siva as '*pinadhabhogi*' is also relevant.

Poetic-fancies on Siva as Gangādhara—We have discussed Siva's Gangādhara form in the chapter on Siva along with iconographic details. What is aimed here again is to review some fanciful verses collected from Subhāṣitas, based on Gangādhara form. From the art representations of Siva-Gangādhara we know that in the early phase of Hindu iconographic art, at the time of the descendance of Gangā first of all she is rarely shown in her anthropomorphic forms, and secondly Siva also is shown all alone receiving her in the watery stream form, without Parvati being present in his side. This trend in art is very much noticed from Aihole and Elephanta depictions.[1] The anthropomorphic form of Gangā, according to scholars,[2] start coming into notice, sometimes from the late seventh and early eighths century A.D. It is also from the same period when Siva-Gangādhara is found companied by Parvati who does not feel very happy having a co-wife seated on Siva's hair-locks. In the chola sculpture of the eleventh century at Gangaikondacholapuram, Vijayanagara sculptures and paintings from Lepaksi temple etc., this new form of Gangādhara where Parvati is shown feeling jealous on the presence of Ganga and Siva in his turn trying to appease her anger is shown very nicely.[3] The poets of the fanciful verses have taken delight in discussing this later iconographic form of Gangādhara where Parvati is not simply shown being present on the occasion and feeling terribly jealous only but also rebuking Siva for having a co-wife. The antiquity of the trend of this kind of poetry goes earlier to the Gupta period. The first authentic sloka of the kind comes from the poet—Dramatist Viśakha-datta—who very clearly refers Gangā on the head of Siva as Dhanyā.

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[1] *Ancient India*, No. 6, p. 62, pl. XXVII, B.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 62, pl. XXVII, A.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 63, fig. 40.

धन्या केयं स्थिता ते शिरसि ? शशिकला
किं नु नामैतदस्या !
नामैवास्यास्तदेतत् परिचितमपिते विस्मृतं कस्य हेतो:
नारीं पृच्छामि नेन्दुं ?
कथयतु विजया न प्रमाणं यदीन्दु:
देव्य निन्होतुमिच्छोरिति सुर-सरितं शाठ्यमव्याद्वि भोर्वः ।।[1]

Parvati asking Siva :

P.—Who is the blessed lady poised on your head ?

S.—She is the crescent-moon.

P.—Is this, then her name ?

S.—That is how, in sooth, she is called. You have been familiar with it; I wonder how should you have forgetten it.

P.—I am asking about the woman, not the moon !

S.—Let Vijaya speak, if you are still unconvinced that it is not moon.

May the artful ingenuity of our Lord—desirous of hiding Ganga—the meandering river of the immortals, from Parvati preserve you for ever.[2]

Remarkable point of iconographic interest in this verse is the mention of Gangā as a woman (Dhanyā) and not as a watery-stream. It seems that the germs of later date iconographic developments were already present during Gupta period. At least this much is true in the field of literature. The terms like śāṭhya (ingenuity) used for Siva-confirm the poetic trends of the later date poetry where many such gods have been dealt like friendly mortal beings.

Based on the above style, phraseology, tradition and trend—we get so many fanciful slokas from the later date poetry. These verses, as said before, are found in the mangalācarana portions of Sanskrit subhāṣitas. A typical sloka of the type is cited very often by the scholars.[3]

1. Mudrārākṣasam, 1.1.
2. *Ibid.*, The english translation of Mr. R.S. Pandit has freely been utilised here.
3. J.A.S.L., Vol. XXI, 1955, p. 80.

मौलौ किन्नु महेश ? मानिनि जलं
किं वक्त्रं ? अम्भोरूहं
किं नीलालक वेणिका ? मधुकरी
किं भ्रूलता ? वीचिका
किं नेत्रे ? शफरौ
किमस्तनयुगं ? प्रेङ्खद्रथांगद्वयम्
साशंकामिति वञ्चयन् गिरि सुतां गंगाधरः पातुः वः ॥[1]

Parvati asking Siva :

P.—Mahesa ! What is on your head ?

S.—My dear ! It's a water.

P.—But what is that face I see ?

S.—It is lotus.

P.—And what about that bluish braided hair ?

S.—It is the row of female bees.

P.—The creeper like eye-brows ?

S.—Are the waves.

P.—But I see two eyes also over there.

S.—They are the glittering fishes, my dear.

P.—Then what about pair of breasts ?

S.—These are the Cakravāka couples.

May Lord Siva Gangādhara who is little hesitant in hiding Gangā and thus befooling her wife Parvati, protect you.

In this verse, the whole anatomy of Ganga as a beautiful lady is explained at length. After seeing the anthropomorphic representation of Ganga where she is depicted nicely with a lotus likeface wavy lines of eyebrows, fishy eyes, protruding breasts and long-braids, one may very well realise the meanings of the terms like '*Vaktramambhoruham*, *Bhrūlata-vicīka*, *netra-śafari*,[2] and *nilālakaveṇikā*, etc.

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[1] *Subhasitaratnabhāndāgāram*, p. 6.66.

[2] See the line drawing of Mr. Sivaramamurti from Lepaksi; *Ancient India* No. 6.

In the following another verse on the same pattern Ganga is called as 'Sugātri' one with charming limbs. Here the closeness of the crescent moon with the water of Ganga is compared as a *haṁsa* and the wet colour of the hair, locks as bhūti–the ash, added to the hair of Siva.

एषा ते हर का सुगात्रि ?
कतमा ? मुर्ध्निस्थिता किं ? जटा;
हंसः कि भजते जटां ? नहि शशी;
चन्द्रो जलं सेवते ?
मुग्धे भूतिरियं कुतोऽत्र सलिलं ?
भूतिस्तरंगायते ।
एवं यो विनिगूहते त्रिपथगां पायात्स वः शंकरः[1]

Parvati asking, Dear Siva, who is this beautiful lady with you ?

S.—Who ? and where ?

P.—On your head.

S.—On my head is my jatā.

P.–But, then what this *haṁsa* is doing there in your jatā ?

S.–Oh ! this is not *haṁsa*, but the moon, my dear !

P.—And the moon is enjoying with water you mean.

S.—No, no, you are totally mistaken, because what you see as water is in fact, the ash (*bhūti*) I have applied to my hair-locks.

P.—But, do you want me to believe that these waves art not of any water but of that *bhūti* from your jatā ?

Thus trying to hide Ganga on his head, Lord Siva may protect you.

This sloka is more of poetic interest than of anything else. It has very little affiliation with iconographic elements except that Ganga is mentioned as a '*Sugātri*' in the beginning and as *Tri-pathagā* in the end.

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[1] Op. cit., p. 7.93.

But it is not all the time that Siva succeeds hiding Ganga form Parvati. There are occasions where he is totally non-plushed against the smart quarries from Parvati and she has got chance to scold him right and left. One such example is the following sloka collected from Subhasitas.[1] Here the double meanings intended by the terms like *andhrkāre* and *Kāntendu*, form the wit of the whole thing.

केयं मूर्ध्न्यन्धकारे ? तिमिरमिह कुतः
सुभ्रु कान्तेन्दु युक्ते
कान्ताप्यत्रास्ति काचिन ? ननु भवतु; मया
पृष्टमेतावदेव
नाहं द्वन्द्वं करोमीत्यपनय शिरसः तूर्षं एनां इदानीं’
इत्थं प्रोक्तो भवान्या प्रतिवचन जितः पातु वश्चन्द्रचूडः ।[2]

P.—O ! the enemy of Andhaka ! who is on your head ?

Siva—(Twists the meaning of the term—*andhkāra*—as *andhakāra i.e.* darkness) and replies saying where is darkness in the presence of beloved moon my dear.

Parvati also takes a different meaning of the term '*Kāntendu*' as a moon-faced beloved (*Kāntā*) and scolds Siva for it. She says, "I am not asking any of your beloveds, let them be, if they are; but one thing I want to warn you is that 'if you do not want to have a clash in your house, better out this wicked lady immediately now and here itself.

May that Siva who was caught out of his own words, protect you.

From the above references what is meant is to glean out the basis ideas—behind the iconography of Siva as Gangādhara. It was never the aim of the poets to make Gangā a target of Parvati's jealousy. They have equally prayed Ganga in so many words as we have partly seen in our main discussion on *Gangādhara*. Out of so many charming verses found in Subhāṣita collections, to sum up the discussion, citing one such example here will not be out of place.

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1. Op. cit., p. 8.104.
2. *Ibid.*

एषा धर्मपताकिनी तटसुधा सेवा वसन्नाकिनी,
शुष्यत्पातकिनी भगीरथ तपः साफल्य हेवाकिनी ।
प्रेमारूढ पिनाकिनी गिरिसुता साकेकरालोकिनी,
पापाडम्वर डाकिनी त्रिभुवनानन्दाय मन्दाकिनी ॥[1]

The gist of the whole verse, in short, is that though Ganga on the hair-lock of Siva is being looked by Parvati with an aweful eyes, she is there mainly because of the love of Pināki (Siva). Adjectives qualifying Ganga, like '*Dharma-patākinī*, *Nākinī*, *Tapah-sāfalyahevākini*,[2] *Premārudha-pinākinī* etc. tend a good commentary on the merits of Gangā.

Besides Gangā who has received a welcome attention from the side of artists and poets both, there is Sandhyā – Lady of the Twilight who is dealt by the poets and in poetry only receiving same treatment as that of Gangā. While discussing Siva *Ardhanārīśvara* we had occasion to remark on some verses where Sandhyā is referred; but those are the verses relevent only in the context of Ardhanārīśvara. Here we will see few verses where Sandhyā is made a main theme of the poetic fancies.

Siva seated in evening prayer (probably in his Dhyāna-Dakṣiṇā-pose, if considered on iconographic account or may be at the eve of Sandhyā-Tāṇḍava) is supposed by Parvati, to be paying court to Sandhyā—the Lady of the Twilight. In this context the questions of Guha—their little son—are presented in the verse as follows :

मातर्जीव किमेतदञ्जलिपुटे तातेन गोप्यायते,
वत्स ! स्वादुफलं; प्रयच्छति न मे, गत्वा गृहाण स्वयं ।
मात्रैवं प्रहिते गुहे विघटयत्याकृष्य संध्याञ्जलिं,
शंभोर्भिन्नसमाधि रूद्ध रभसो हासोद्गमः पान्तु वः ॥[3]

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1. Op. cit., p. 9.130.
2. It is interesting here to note the antiquity of the word '*Hevakini*' feminine from '*Hevāka*', which is supposed to be a later date addition in sanskrit language. *Hevākinī* in this context means one who is ardently desirous of the success of *tapa*. See Apte's Sanskrit-English Dictionary pt. III, p. 1765 and the references cited therein.
3. Op. cit., p. 7.94.

O! my dear mother! what is it that Daddy guards in the hollow of his hands ?

P.—'Darling, it is a delicious fruit'. He won't give it to me. Go and take it yourself.

Thus, urged by the mother, Guha seizes and separates the hands folded in adoration to the lady of the Twilight, of Siva who, angry at the interruption bursts into laughter at sight of his son; may the laughter protect you.

Following verse on this theme is even more interesting. Here, in the fancy of the poet Parvati in her accusations against Siva's infidelity towards her and his weakness for other women reaches its climax. Her accusations in anger reveal two basic ideas relevent to the iconography of Siva. One is that he is holding Gangā on his head and the other is that he took poison after the churning of the ocean. It is the fancy of the poet who takes the mythological incidents in an absolute worldly manner which strikes the readers and makes the verse many times more attractive.

Parvati in her raised anger says to Siva that I know you pay court to Sandhyā and I am also fully aware of the existence of that lady called Gangā on your hair, but somehow, so far, I have tolerated these things. Now, again after the ocean was churned and a charming lady called Laksmi was obtained from there; once more you became mad after her. But, as she went to Hari, and did not choose you, you have swallowed the poison. You seem to me such a great rake being mad after ladies, that I hate even your touch.

संध्यां यत्प्रणिपत्य लोकपुरतो बद्धाञ्जलिर्याचसे,
धत्से यच्चनदीं विलज्जं शिरसा तन्नाम सोढं मया ।
श्रीर्यातामृत मंथने यदि हरिं कस्मादविषं भक्षितं,
मा स्त्री लंपट ! मा स्पृशेति गदितः गौर्या हरः पातु वः ।।[1]

Another incident from mythology on which some popular iconographic forms have developed and which has attracted the fancies

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1. Op. cit., p. 7,95.

of the poets is Siva and his marriage. Iconographic details, in this context, hava already been discussed under the title of Kalyāna-sundara-Siva. Now we shall see how the poets have enjoyed the same theme.

From the story part of Siva's marriage we know that much before he agreed to marry with Parvati, a group of seven *risis* went to see her father Himalaya. And from the philosophic part of Hindu belief we also know that gods like Siva were *ajanmā* (not born out of parents) and *anādi* (their origin is beyond knowledge). In the following verse these aspects of the philosophy and the marriage story part of mythology have been made a theme, out of which an interesting contrast is put forward.

At the time seven *risis* visited Himalya, he like a worldly father of a girl started making the following enquiries from them about Siva.

किं गोत्रं ? किमु जीवनं ? किमु धनं ? का जन्मभूः किं वयः ?
किं चारित्रममुद्‌य के सहचराः ? के वंशजा प्राक्तनाः ।
का माता ? जनकः शिवस्य क इति प्रह्वेण पृथ्वी भृता,
पृष्टा सस्मित नम्रमूक वदनाः सप्तर्षयः पान्तु वः ।।[1]

Himalaya asks–What is the lineage of Siva ? What is his source of living, his profession etc. ? How rich he is ? What is his birth place, age and what type of person he is ? What are his friends and the people whose company he keeps in ? Who are his elders, his mother and father ?

May the *risis* who could not reply any of the questions, and remained quiet with a smile on their faces protect you.

Other sloka of the same type hints more on iconographic part of Kalyānasundra. Here, at the time of marriage, presence of Brahma is mentioned, being there as a priest. We know from iconography that in the vivāha-mandapa between Siva and Parvati Brahma is always shown seated. The same fact is witnessed in the following sloka, where the priest of Himalaya at the time of *Śākhoccāra* (in which the family lineage and the names of the elders of both the parties in marriage are recited by the respective priests) ceremony asks Śiva, the names of his father, grandfather and the great grand-father.

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[1] Op. cit., p. 7,79.

तातं तत्तात तातं कथय हर कुलेऽलंकृते संप्रदाने,
तच्छुत्वा चन्द्रमौलिर्नतमुख कमलो जात लज्जो वभूव ।
वह्मावादीत्तदानीं श्रृणुत हर कुलं 'वेदकण्ठो ग्रकण्ठौ,
श्रीकण्ठान्नीलकंठः प्रहसित बदनः पातु वश्चन्द्र चूडः ॥[1]

'Tell me the names of your honourable father, his father and his father's father ? having heard this, Siva took his face down and was a bit ashamed, but Brahma who was present there at the moment supported Siva and said, "Now listen the names of his ancestors. First was Veda kaṁtha, from him was Ugrakamtha and from Ugrakamtha was Śrīkamtha—whose son is our Nilakamtha—the Siva." Obviously it made Siva to smile. May that smile of the Lord be to your good.'

Amongst the popular names of Siva, his names like *gajājinah*,[2] Krittivasa[3] are equally famous. These names he got because of the skin (*kritti*) of the elephant (*Gaja*) he wears as an under-garment. Based on this simple fact came out many pictorial depictions in art. A particular mention in this regard may be made to some of the Kangra valley paintings of a later date. But how the poets of these popular verses have tried to paint him, in their fancies is even more interesting.

In the two verses cited below the effects of some of the attributes and mounts of Visnu and Siva have been put together and with their help a nice humour has been intended.

विष्णोरागमनं निशम्य सहसा कृत्वा फणीन्द्रं गुणं,
कौपीनं परिधाय चर्मकरिणः शंभौ पुरो धावति ।

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1. Op. cit., p. 8,98.
2. Kumārasambhavam, V.
3. Kalidasa.

दष्ट्वा विष्णुरथं सकम्प हृदयः सर्पोऽपतद्भूतले,
कृत्तिर्विस्खलिता ह्रियानत मुखो नग्नो हरः पातु वः ॥[1]

Siva, having heard that Visnu is coming to meet him, got up quickly putting his elephant's skin on; which was tied in the waist by the cord of a snake. But the time Visnu appeared on his mount Garuda, snake of the cord became so afraid that it slipped down with the result the skin also came down and Siva became nude. May that embarassed face of Siva being nude protect you.

In another sloka it is the complexity of Siva's own attributes which is made a subject.

भस्मान्धोरग फूत्कृति स्फुट भवद् भालस्थ वैश्वानर-,
ज्वालास्विन्न सुधांशु मंडल गलत्पीयूष धारा रसैः।
संजीव द्विप चर्म गर्जित भय भ्राम्यद्वृषा कर्षण-
व्यासक्तः सहसा द्रिजोप हसितो नग्नो हरः पातु वः ॥[2]

Bhasma (the ash) fell in the eyes of the snake who became blind with anger, and made a terrible hissing (futkāra). On account of his hissing, the fire on the fore-head of Siva became alive creating a severe heat to the moon. Because of the heat, moon started melting and a flow of amṛta came out which fell on the dead skin of the elephant. With the effect of amṛita, the elephant became alive and roared heavily. Nandi being terrified with this, tried to flee in panic and dragged Siva being nude. It became difficult for Parvati to control her laughter. May that Siva protect you.

Before summing up these references about such curious compositions from the later date poetry which no doubt bases or takes inspiration from and in return also reflects on so many iconographic poses of Siva; a reference to the most charming sloka where a virtual clash between the mounts of the family of Siva is dealt with, will be the appropriate one.

We know that Siva has a bull and Parvati a lion as a mount. Their two sons Ganesa and Kārttikeya have got a mouse and peacock for themselves. Snakes on the body of Siva (the *pannaga-*

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1. Op. cit., p. 6.59.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 6.60.

bhūṣaṇa) add an extra charm in it and raise the whole situation to the state of panic.

ग्रत्तुं वाञ्छति वाहनं गणपते राखुं क्षुधार्तः फणी,
तं च क्रौञ्चपतेः शिखी च गिरिजा सिंहोऽपिनागाननम् ।
गौरी जह्नुसुतामसूयति कलानाथं कपालाननो
निर्विग्णः स पपौ कुटुम्ब कलहादीशोऽपि हलाहलम् ॥[1]

There are two suppositions made by the poet after Siva's taking a poison. One as we have seen before, was because of his shocking failure, in not getting Laksmi for himself, and the other one is described here.

'Hungry snake of Siva wants to eat the mouse of Ganeśa and to that snake, the peacock of Kārttikeya is trying to get for himself. Parvati's lion feeling hungry is having eyes even on the elephant faced Ganesa. On the other hand Parvati is jealous of Ganga and the beauty of the moon is diminished by the skull of Siva. It has created such a great tension in the family that, no doubt, because of this everyday conflict Siva preferred to swallow up the great poison.'

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1. Op. cit., 6, 60

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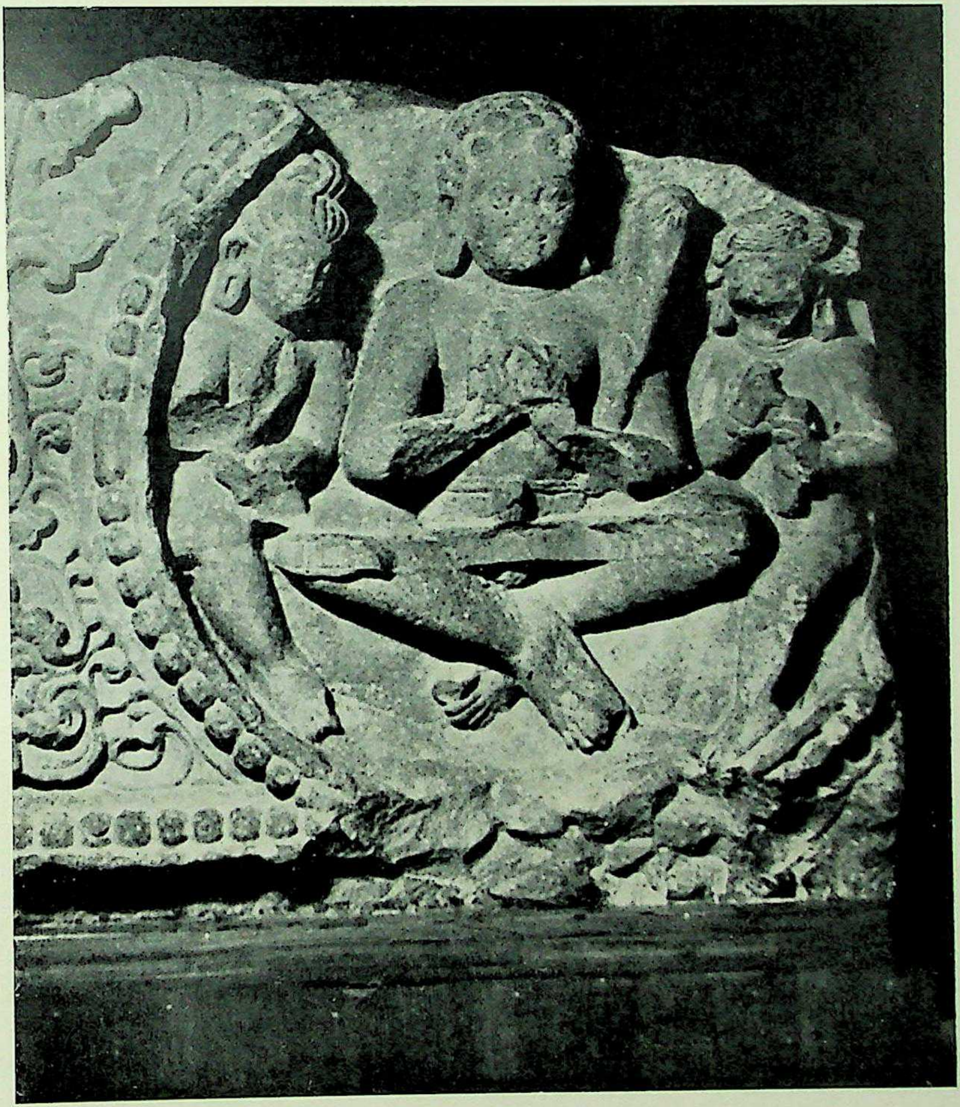
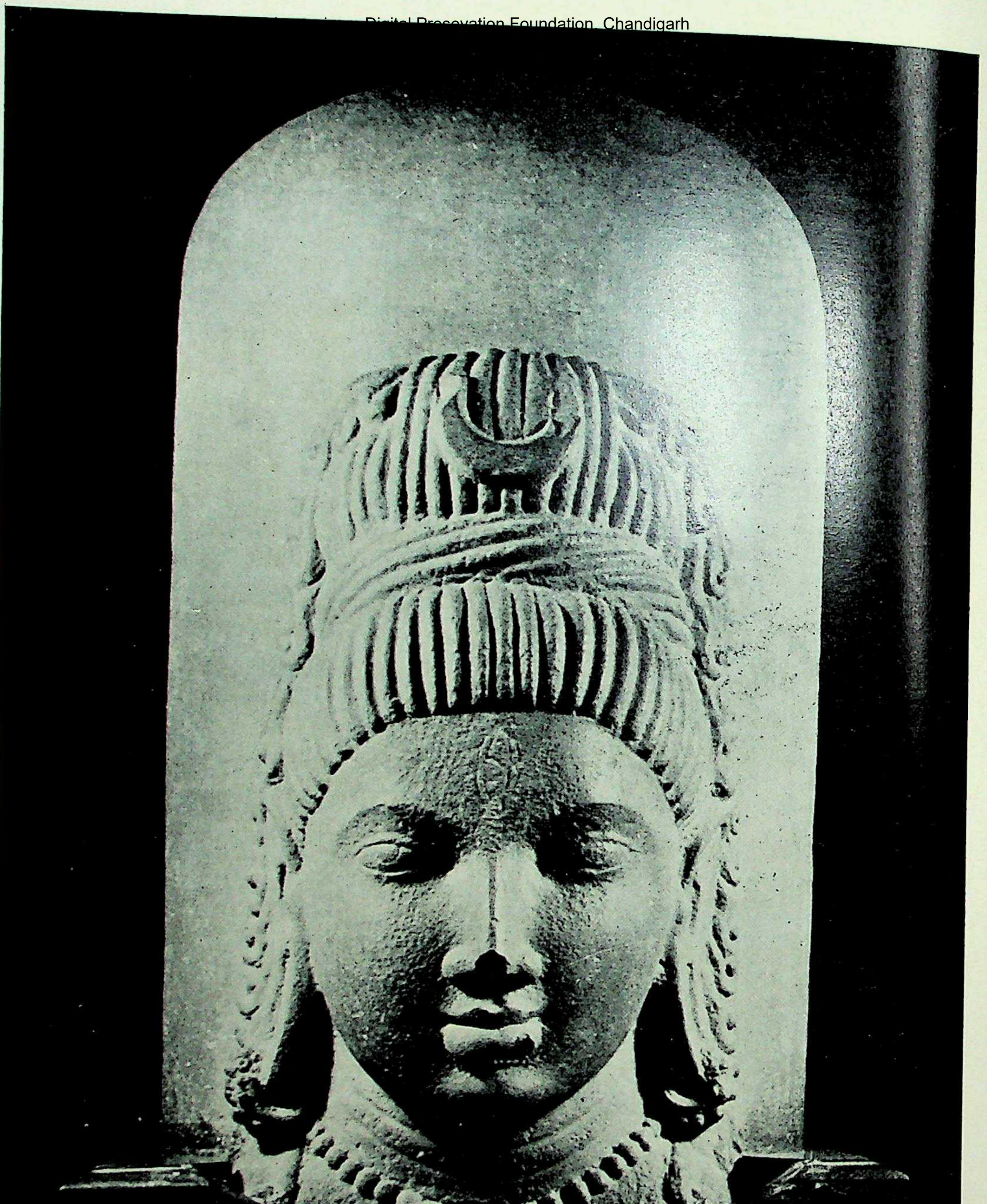
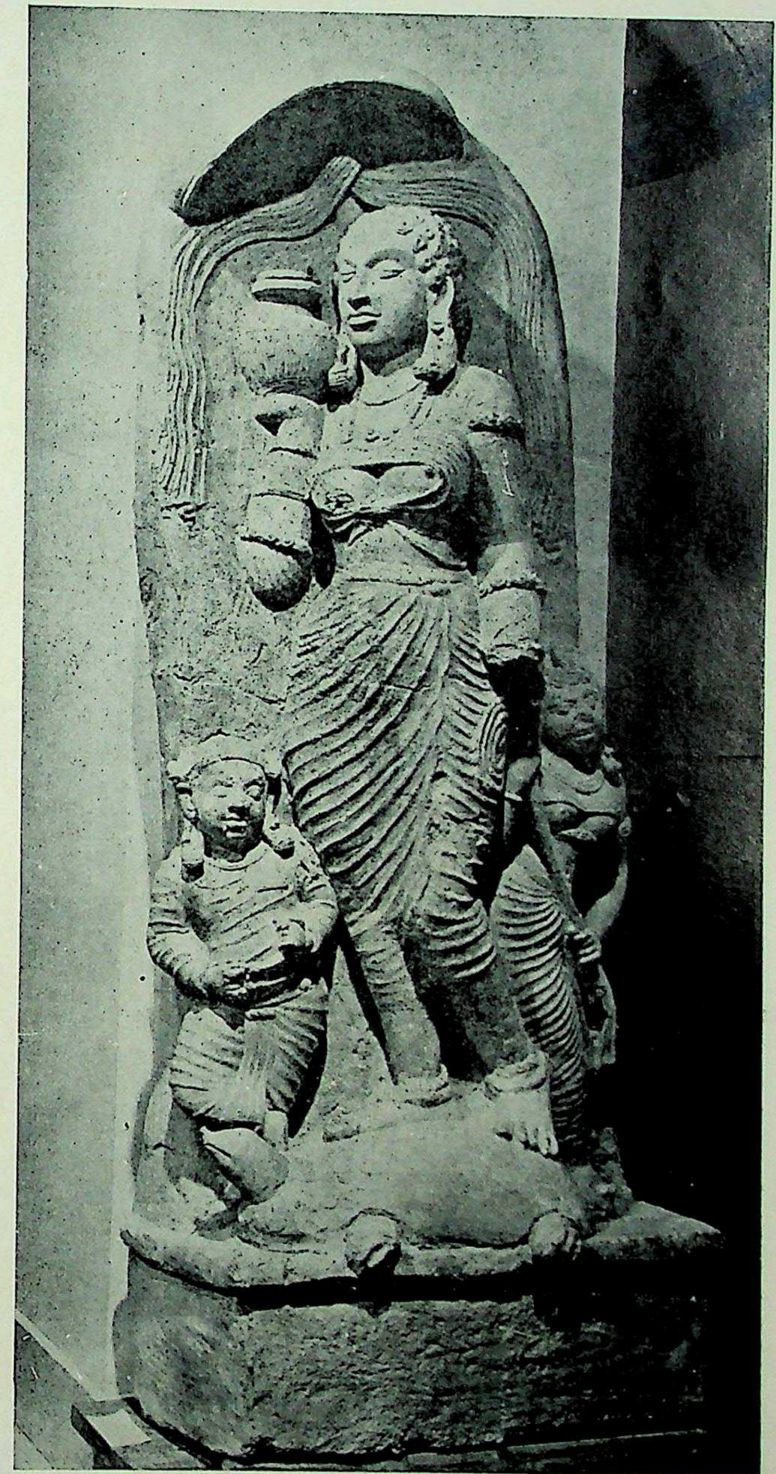


1. Śiva in his Lakulīśa form, Gupta, 5th century A.D., Government Museum, Mathura.

Digital Preservation Foundation, Chandigarh



2. Ekamukha Śiva Liṅga, Gupta, 5th century A.D , Khoh, Dist. Satna, Allahabad Museum, Allahabad.



3. Yamunā, Gupta, 5th century A.D., Ahichchhatra, Dist. Bareilly, National Museum, New Delhi.

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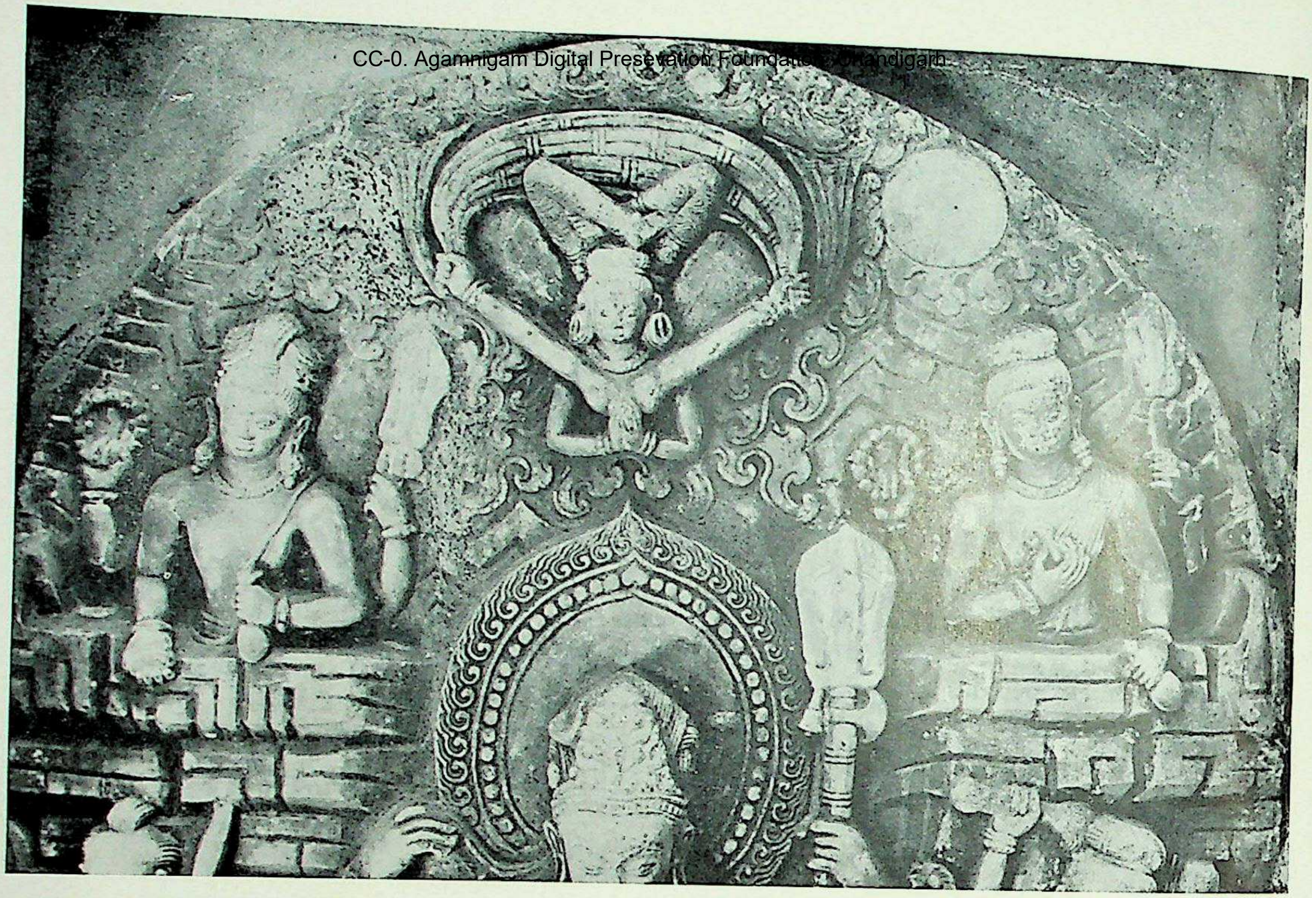
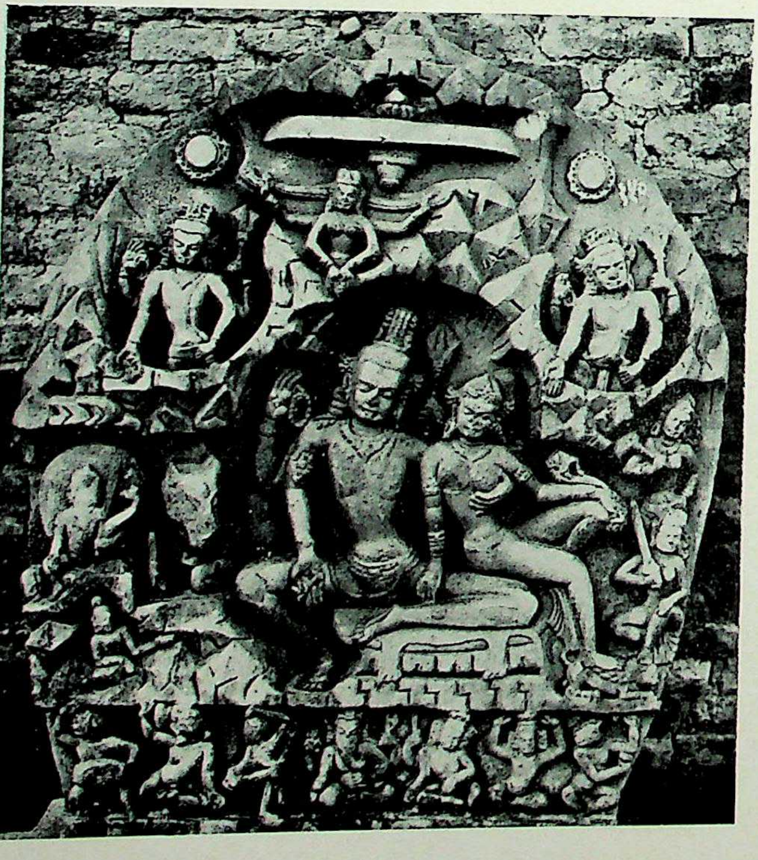
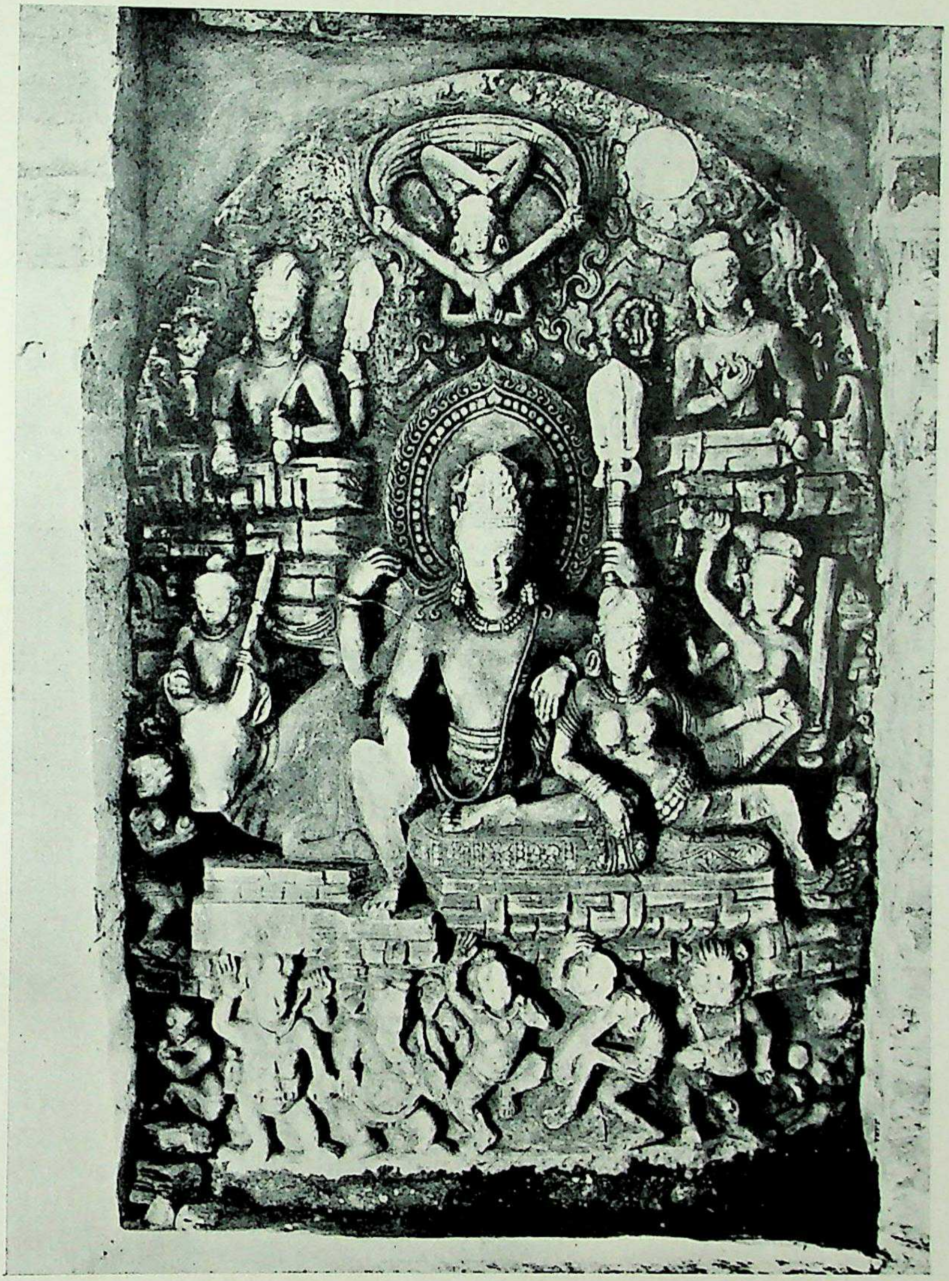


4. Parivārasahita Umā-Maheśvara, Lichchhavi, 8th–9th century A.D., Patan, Nepal.



5. Detail of Umā-Maheśvara Panel, Lichchhavi, 8th–9th century A.D., Patan, Nepal.



6. Umā-Maheśvara Lichchhavi, 8th-9th century A.D., Patan, Nepal.

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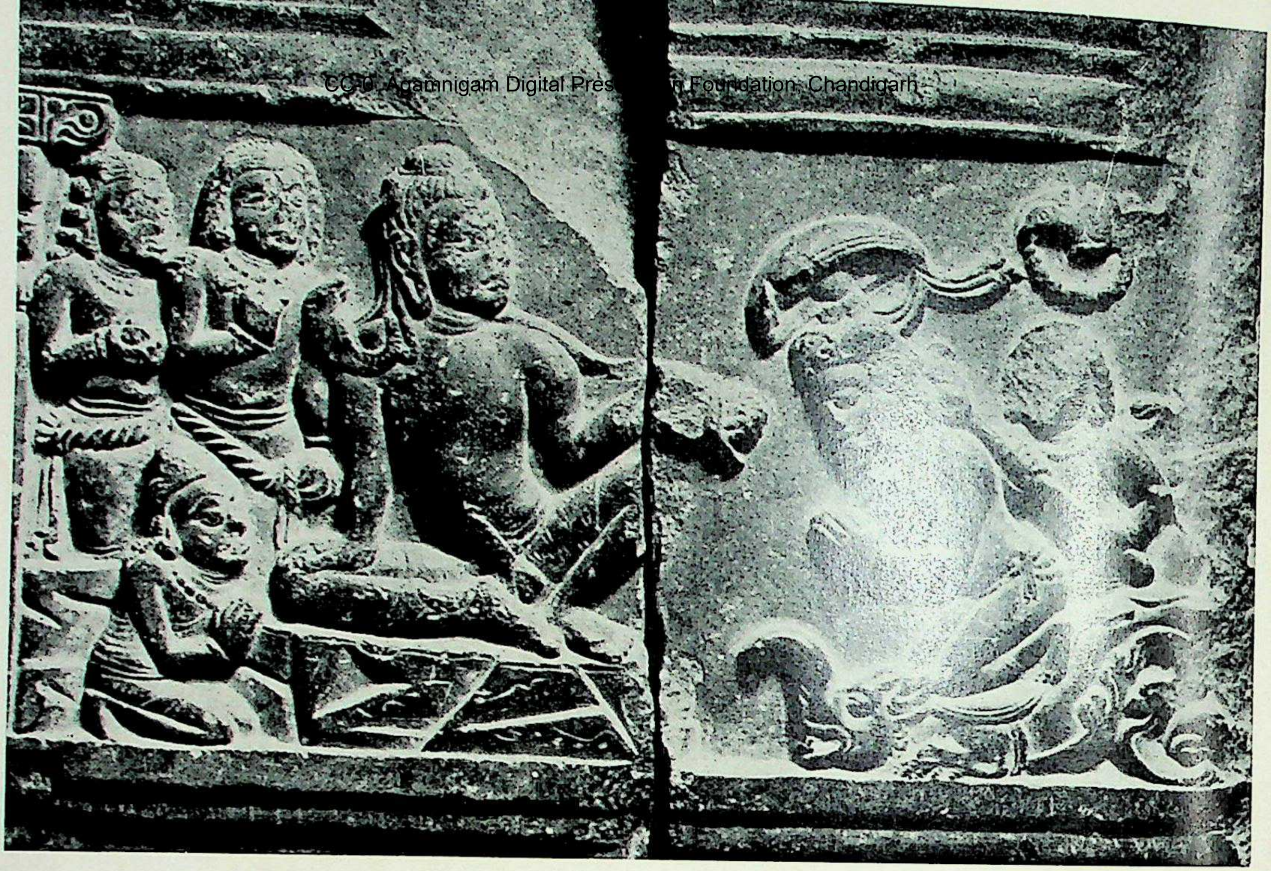
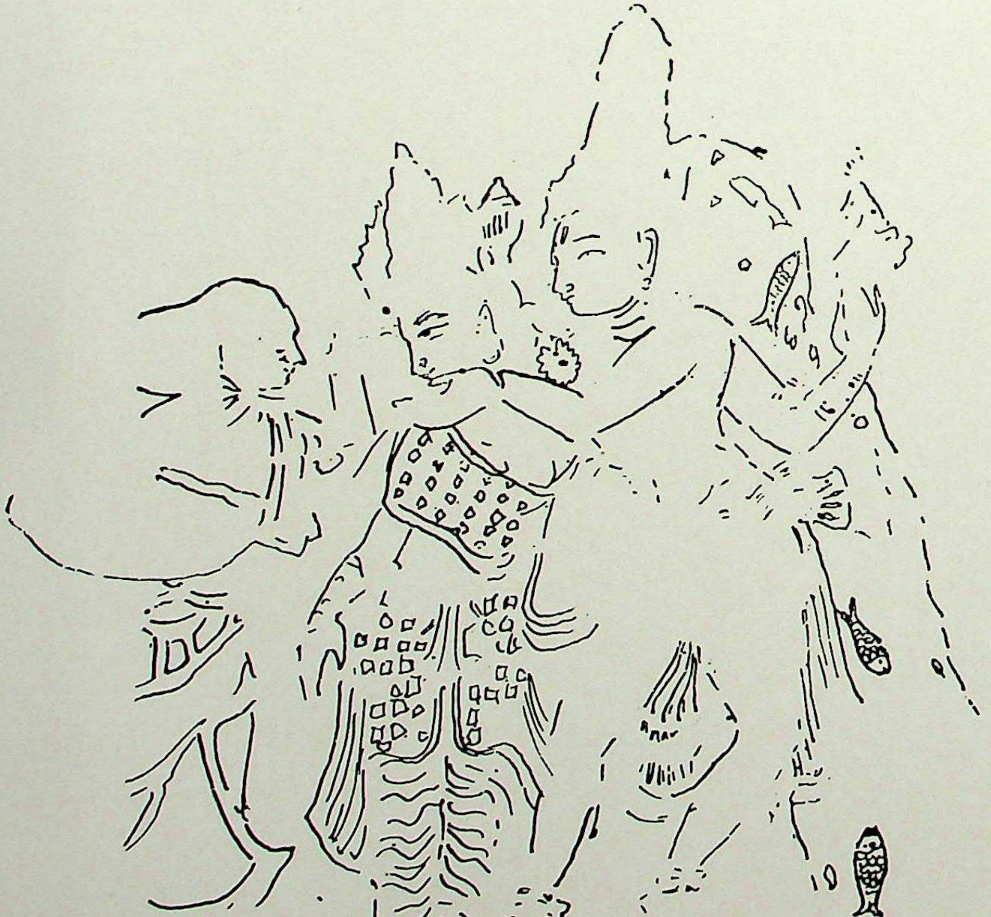


7. Śiva receiving Gaṅgā, 5th century A.D., Chandamau, Bihar, Indian Museum, Calcutta.



8. Śiva-Gaṅgādhara.

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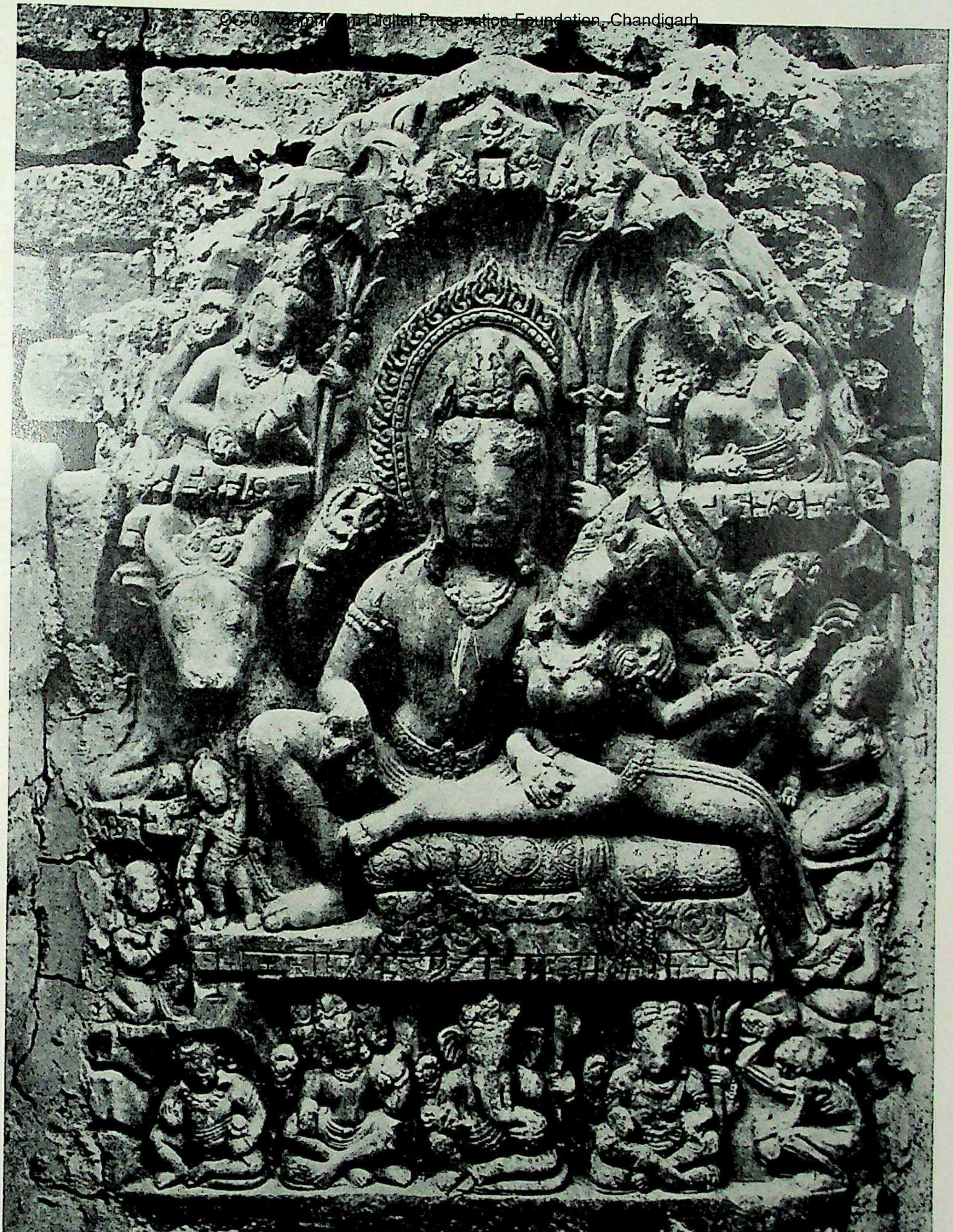
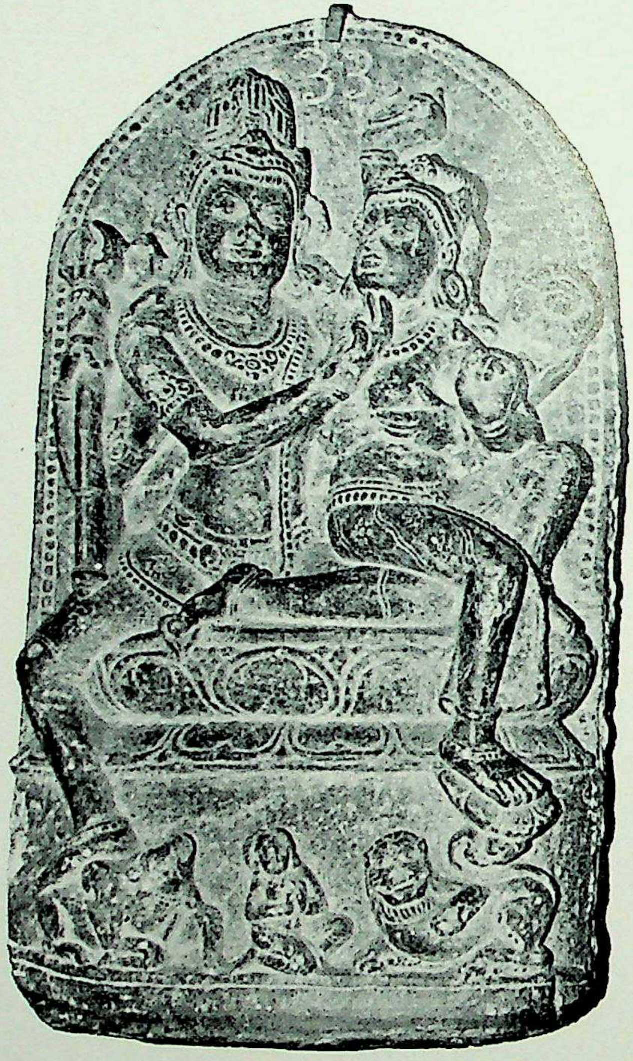
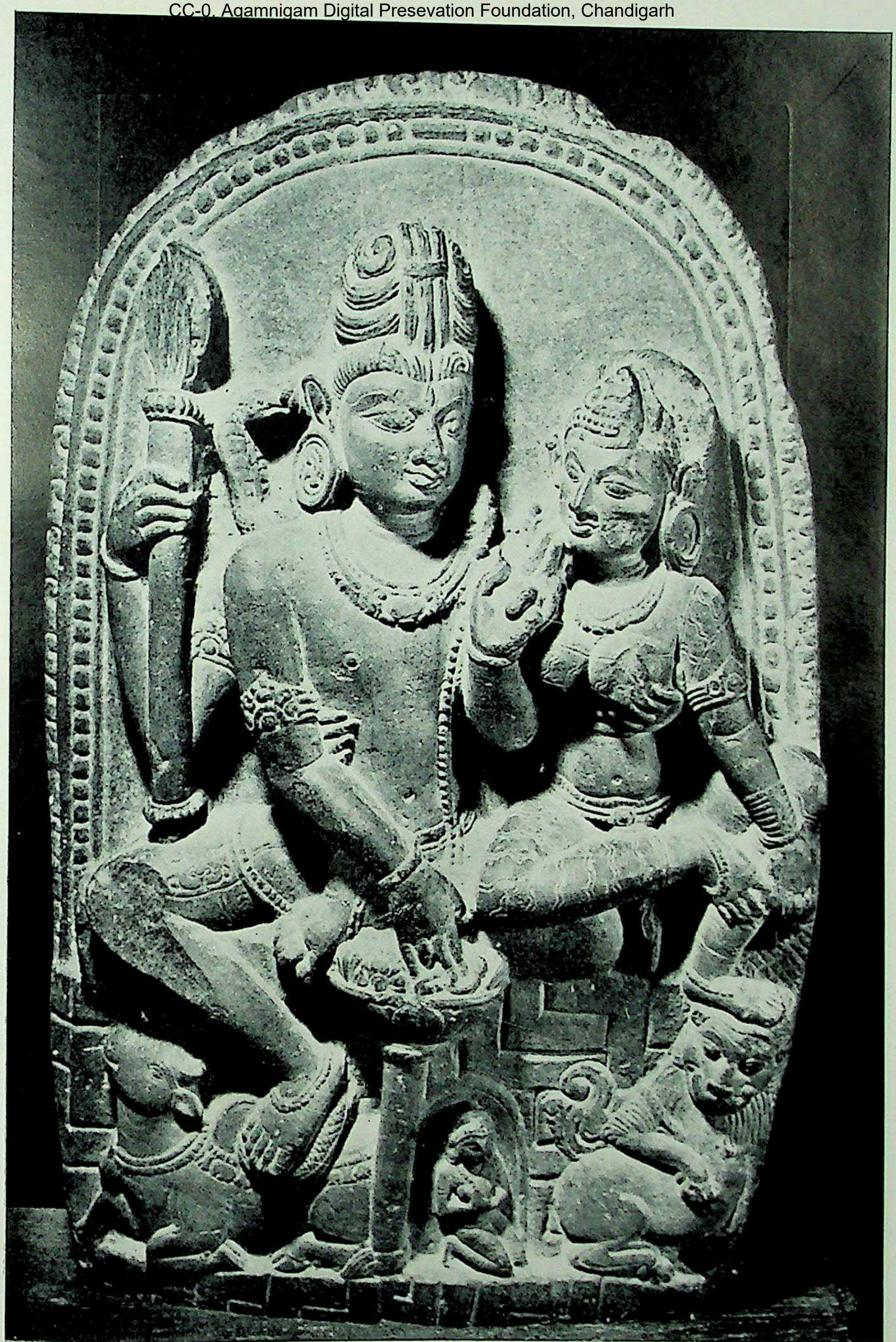


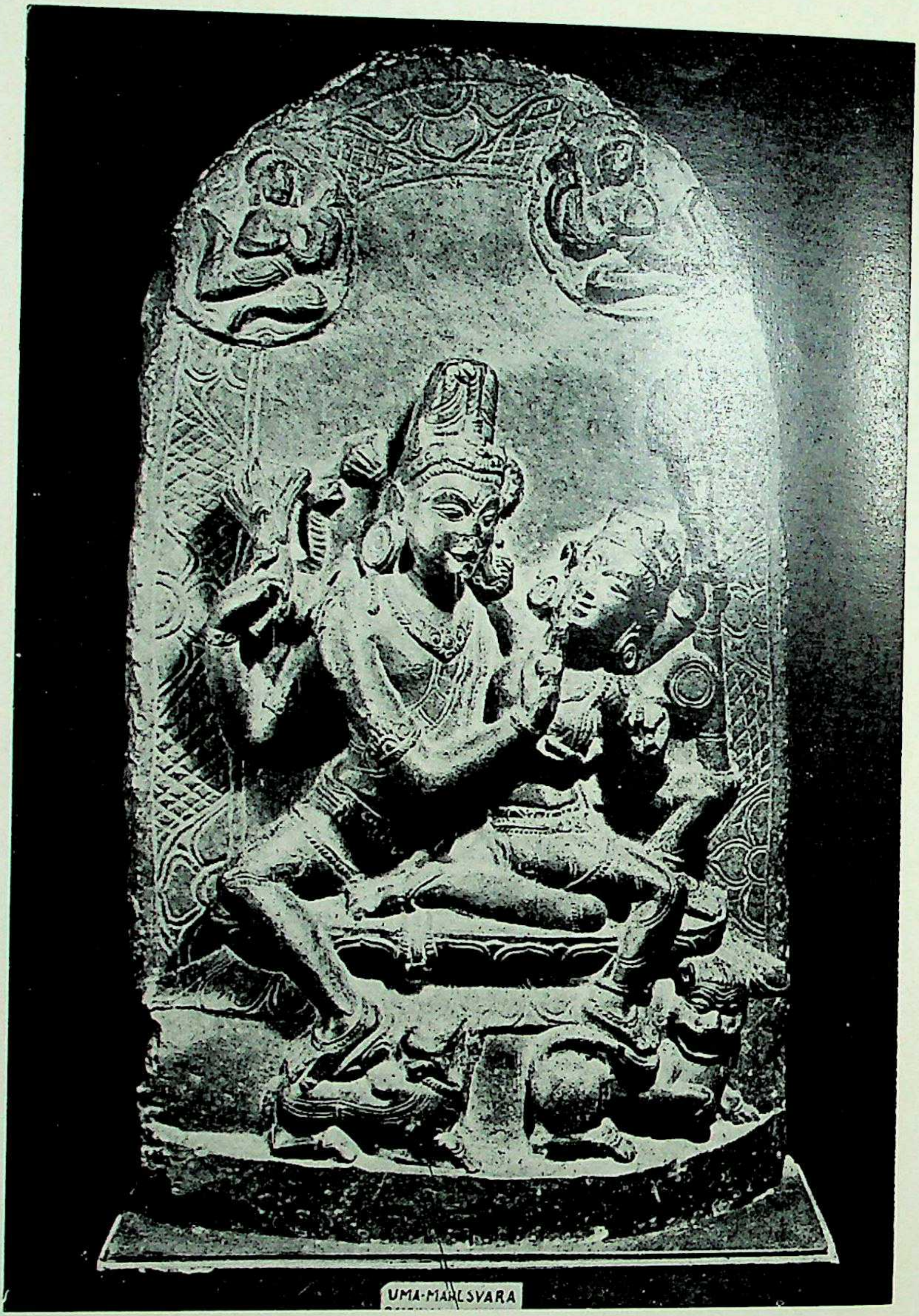
9. Umā-Maheśvara, Lichchhavi, 10th century A.D., Patan, Nepal.



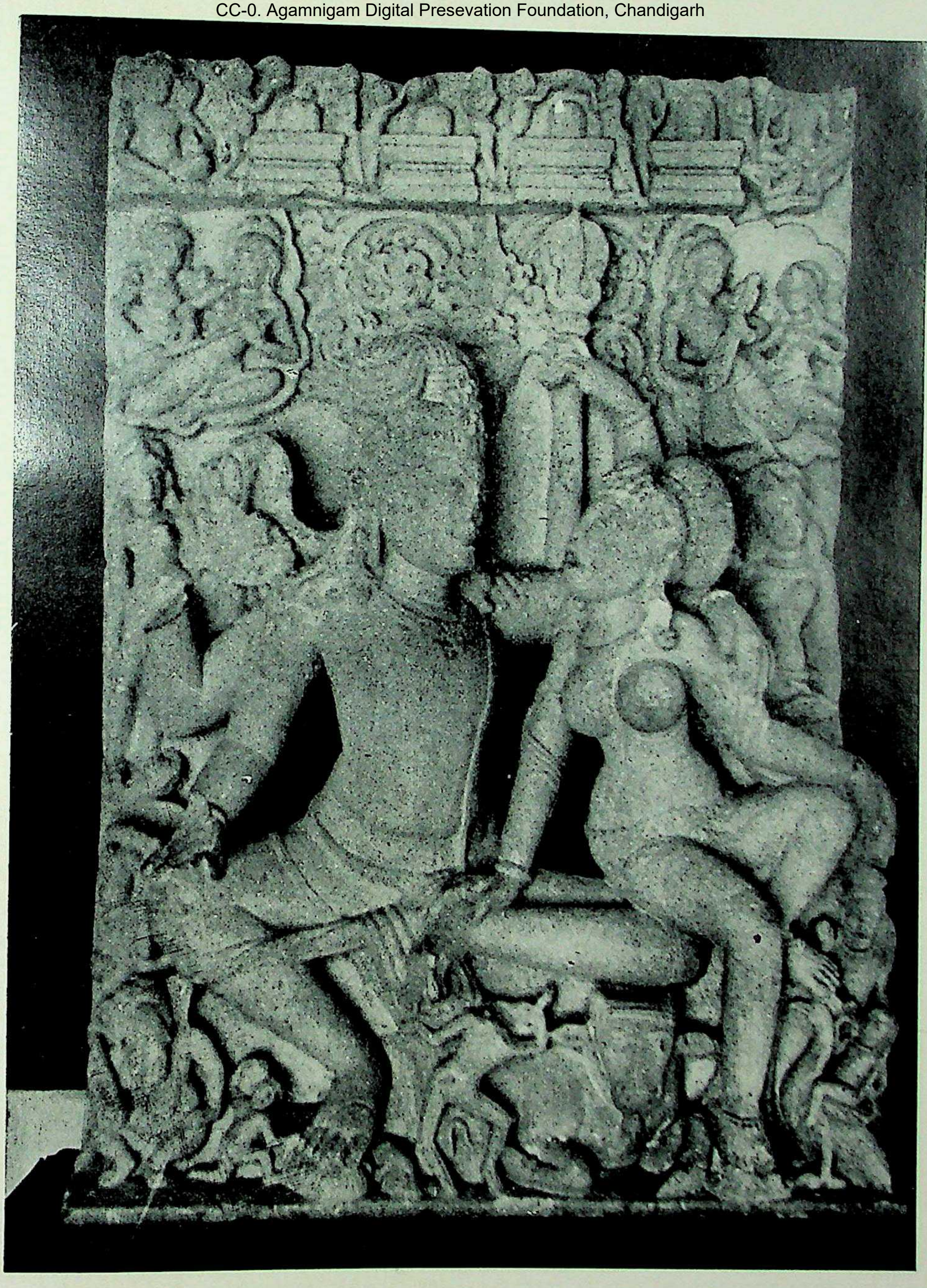
10. Umā-Maheśvara, Pala, *c.* 11th century A.D., Bihar, Indian Museum, Calcutta.



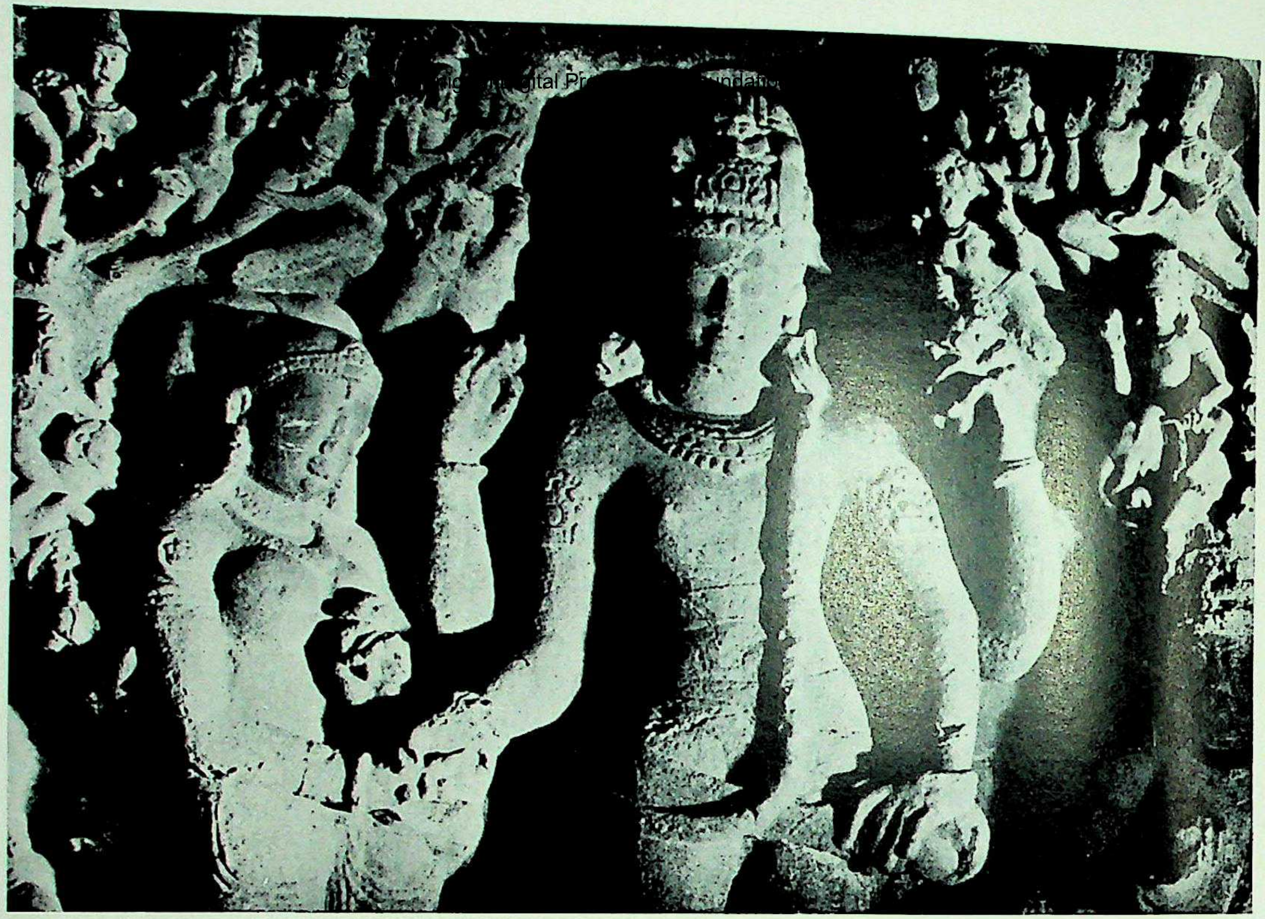
11. Umā-Maheśvara, *c.* 8th century A.D., Bihar, Asutosh Museum of Indian Art, Calcutta.


UMA-MAHESVARA

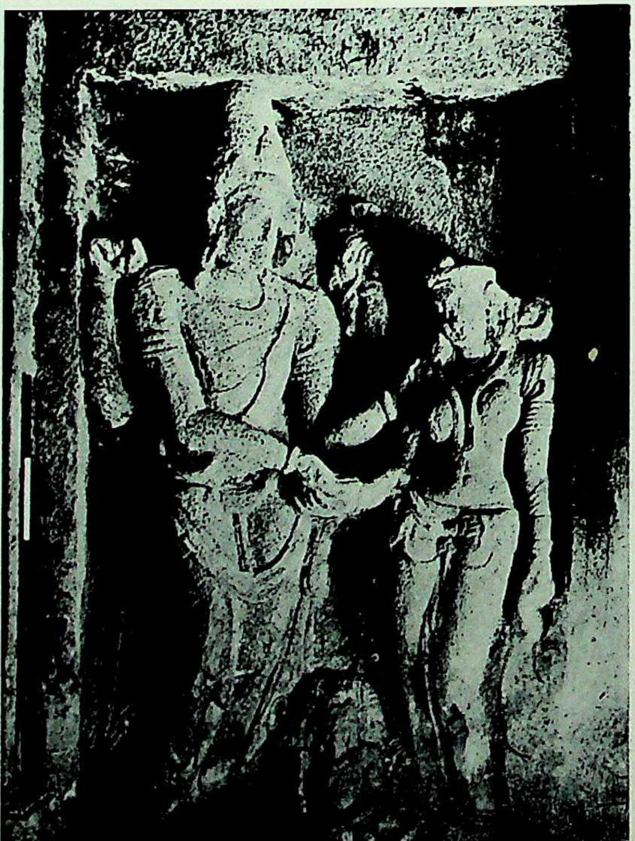
12. Umā-Maheśvara, Pala, *c.* 11th century A.D., Raidighi, West Bengal, Asutosha Museum of Indian Art, Calcutta.



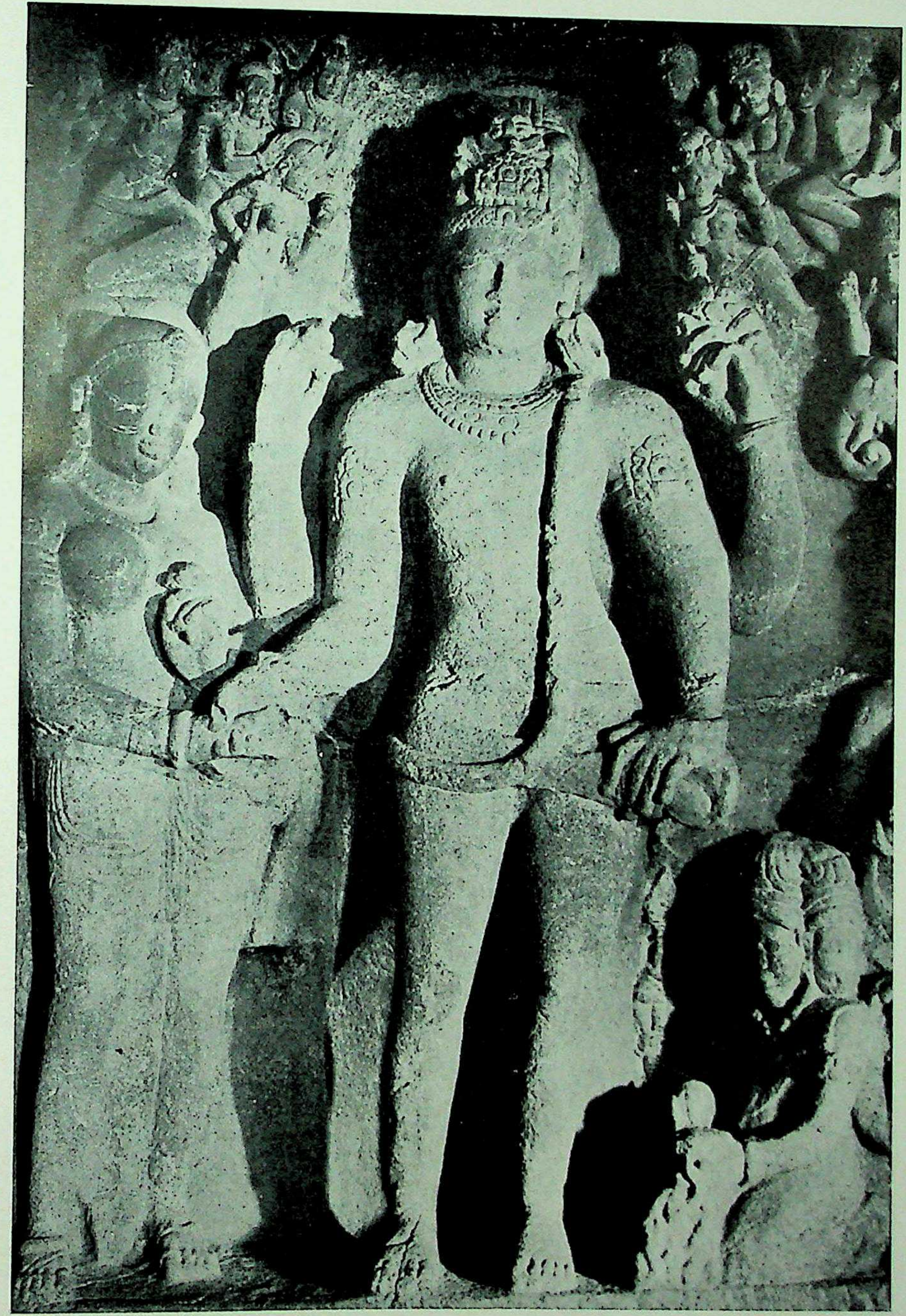
13. Umā-Maheśvara, *c.* 8th century A.D., Bharatpur, Government Museum, Bharatpur.



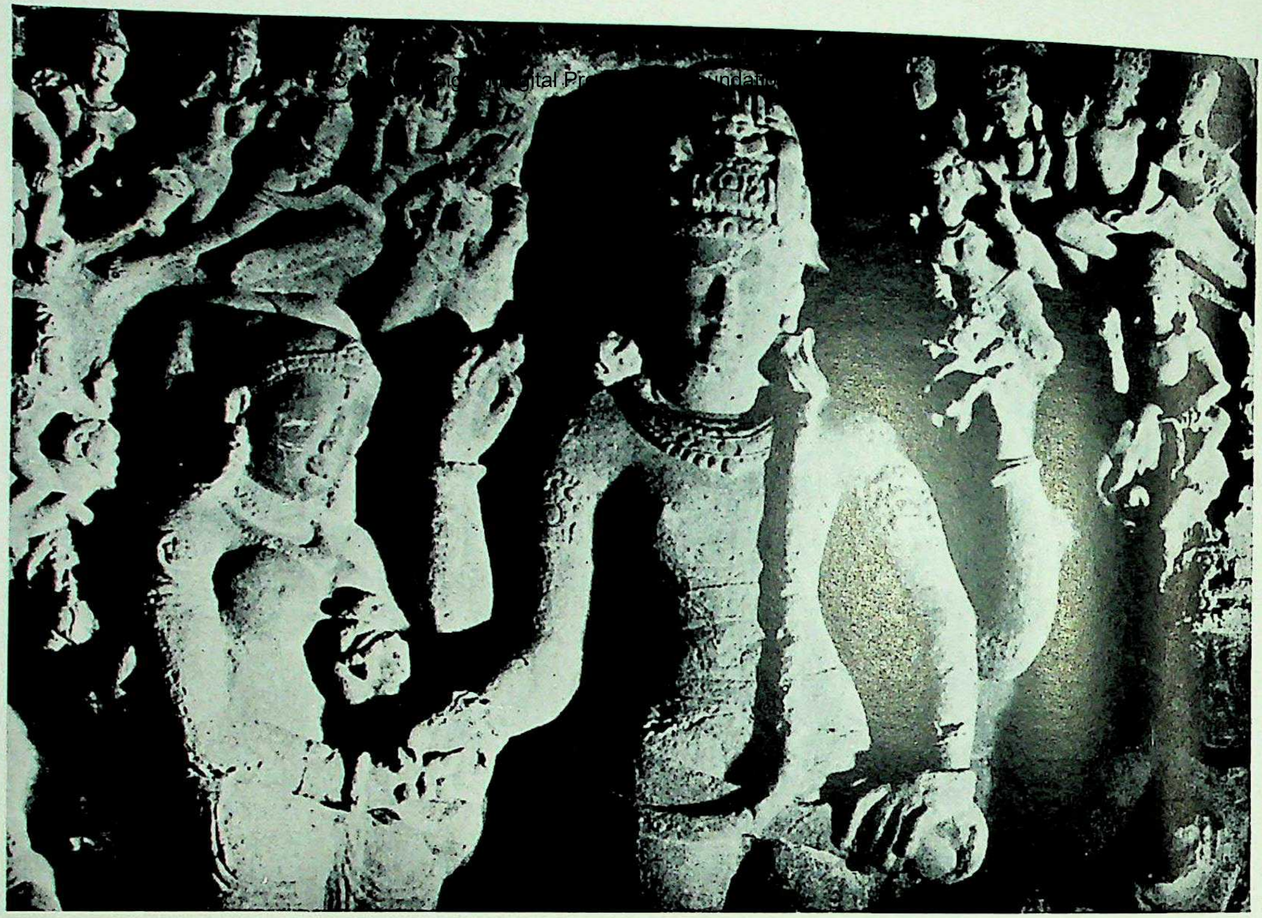
14. Śiva's Marriage, 7th century A.D., Dhumer Lena, Ellora (Cave 29).



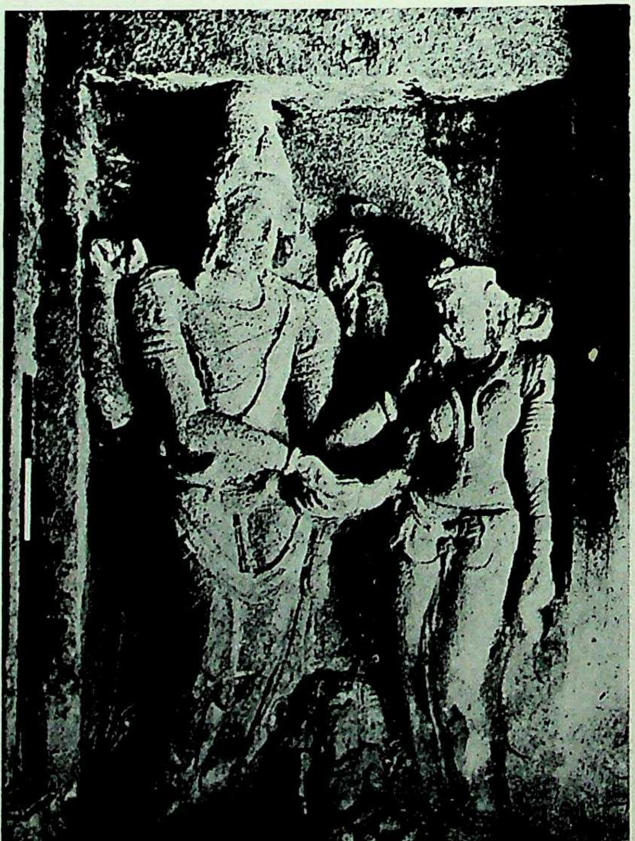
15. Śiva's Marriage, 7th century A.D., Rāmeśvara Ellora (Cave 21).



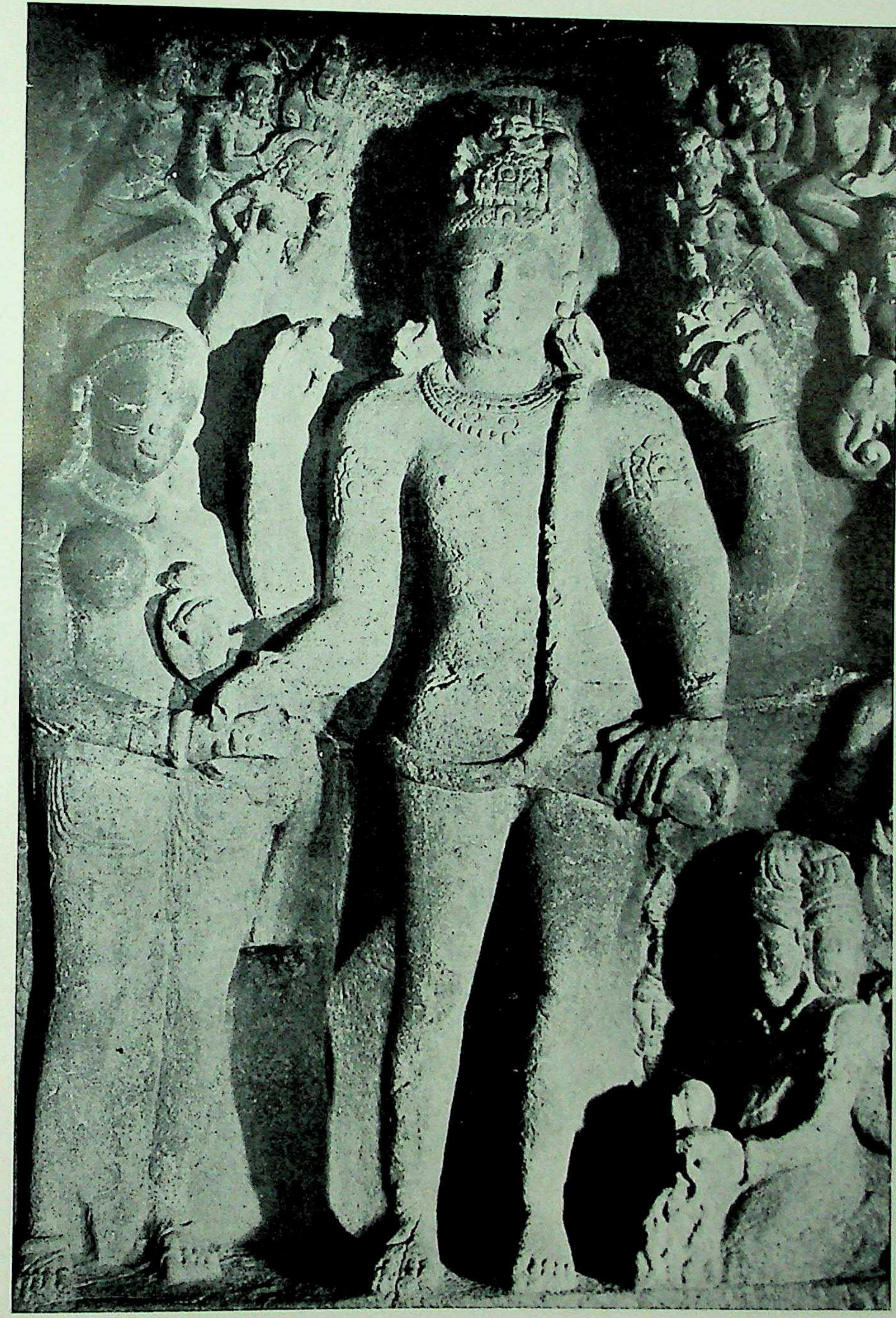
16. Śiva's Marriage, *c.* 8th century A.D., Ellora (Cave 16).



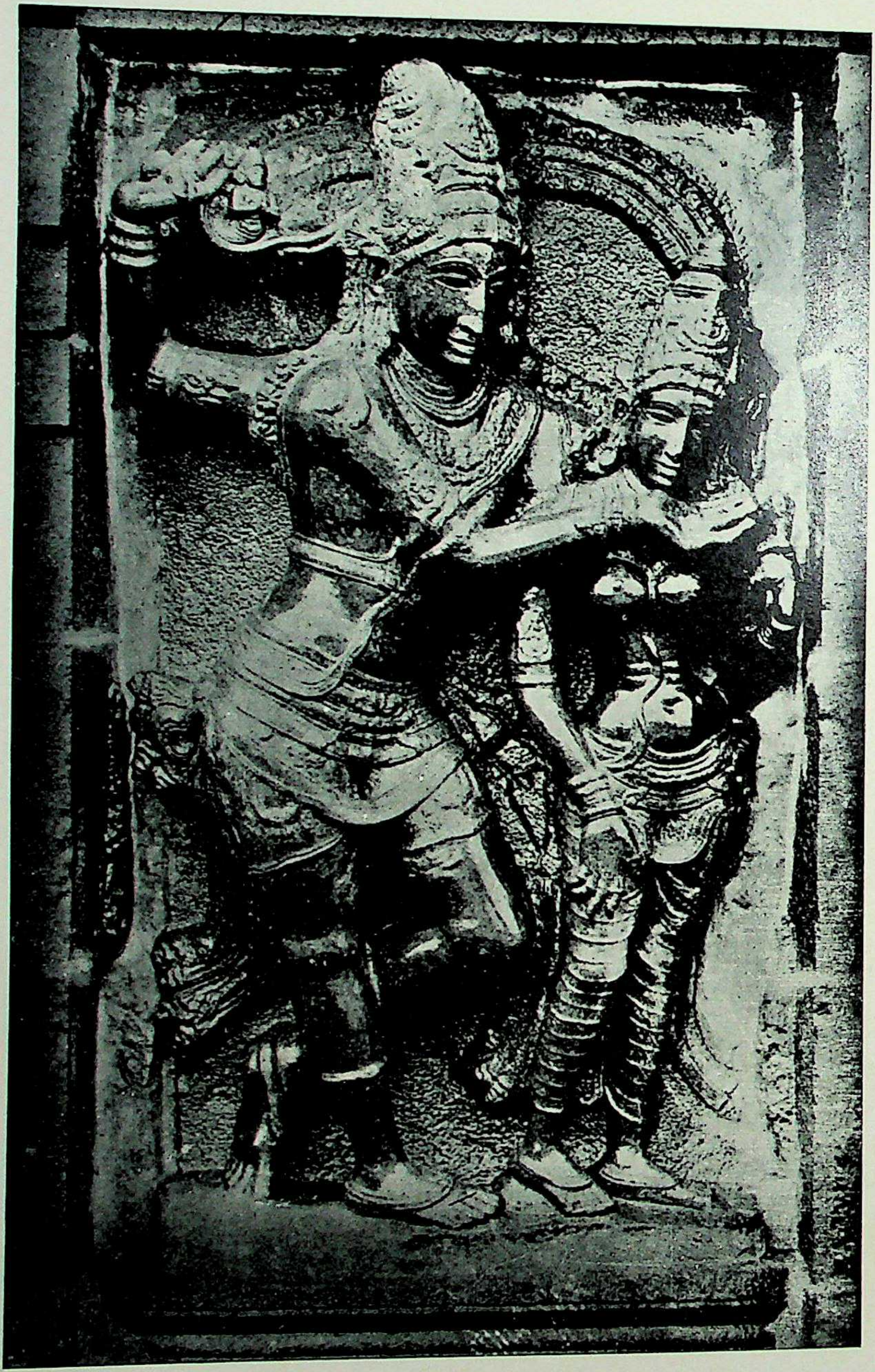
14. Śiva's Marriage, 7th century A.D., Dhumer Lena, Ellora (Cave 29).



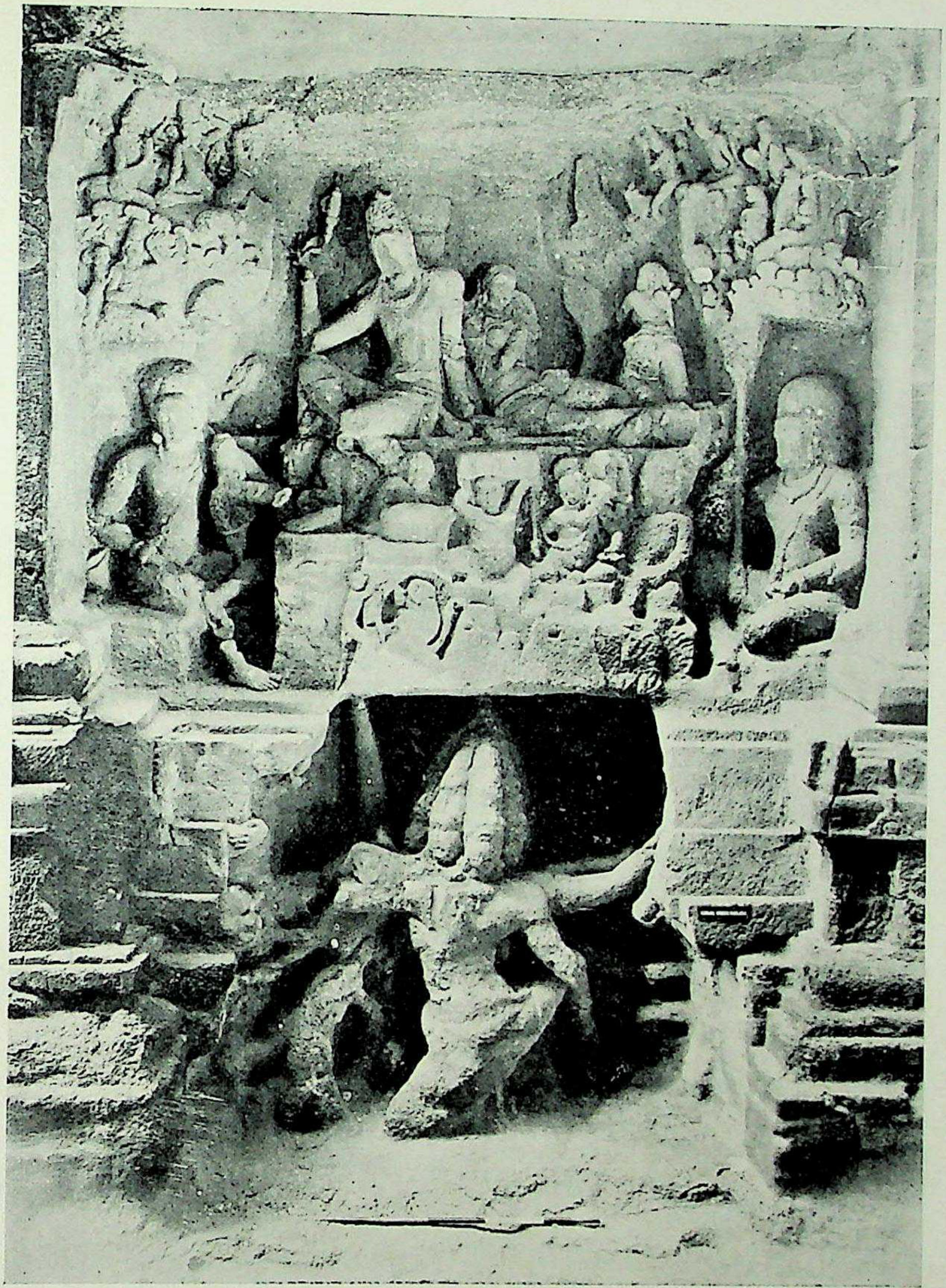
15. Śiva's Marriage, 7th century A.D., Rāmeśvara Ellora (Cave 21).



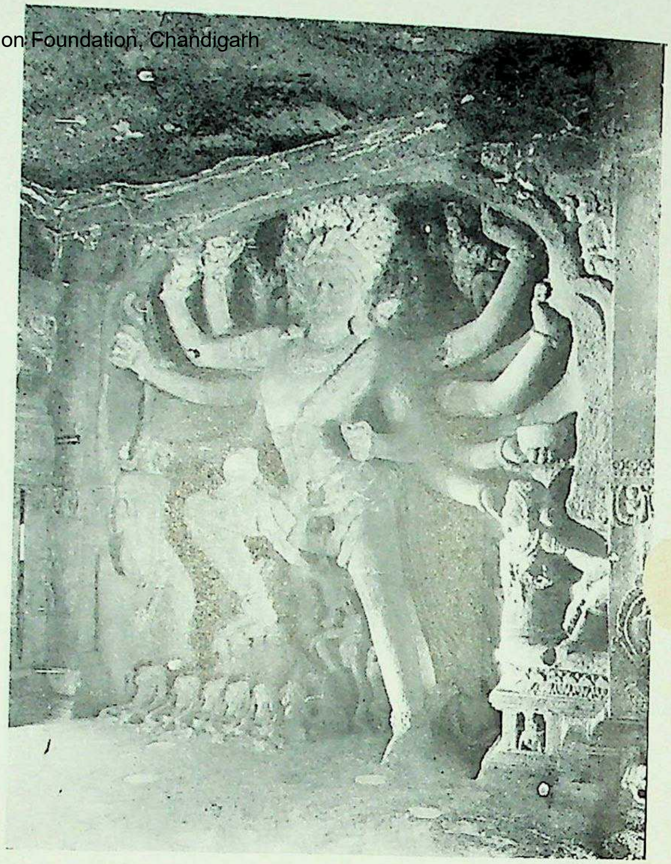
16. Śiva's Marriage, *c.* 8th century A.D., Ellora (Cave 16).



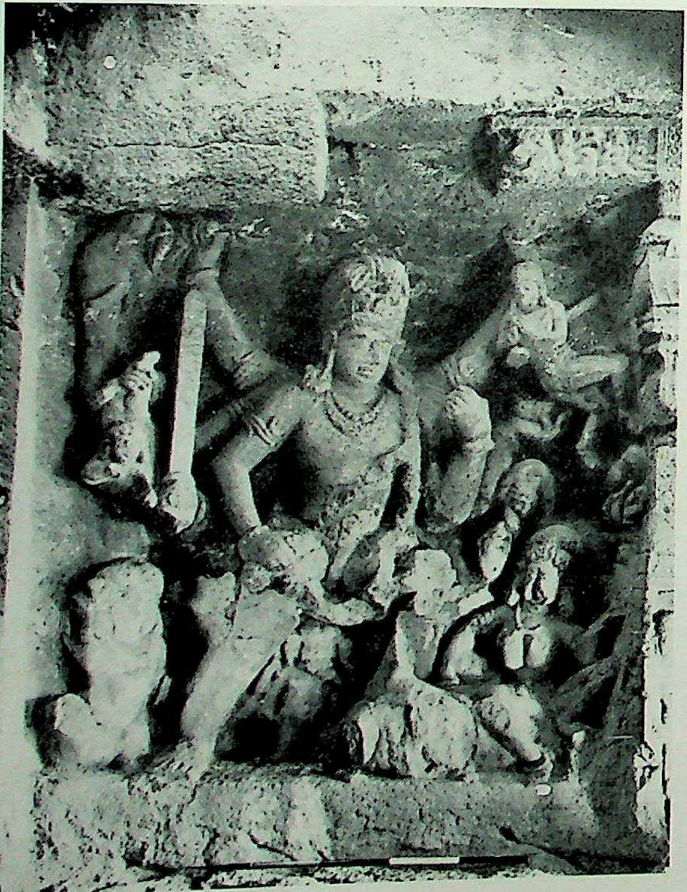
17. Śiva-Gangādhara, c. 12th century A.D. Natraj Temple, Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu.



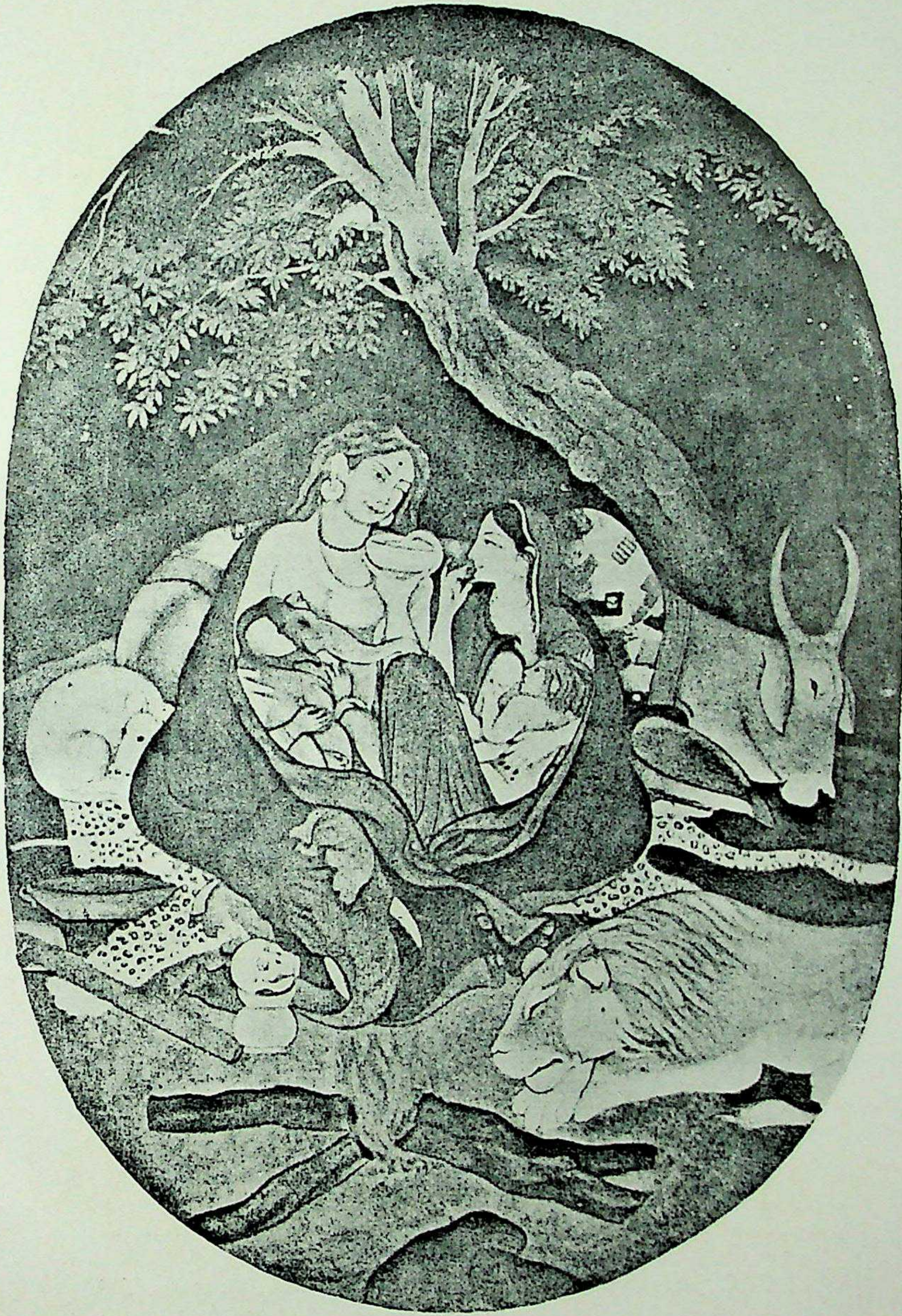
18. Rāvaṇa shaking Kailasa, 8th century A.D., Ellora (Cave 16).



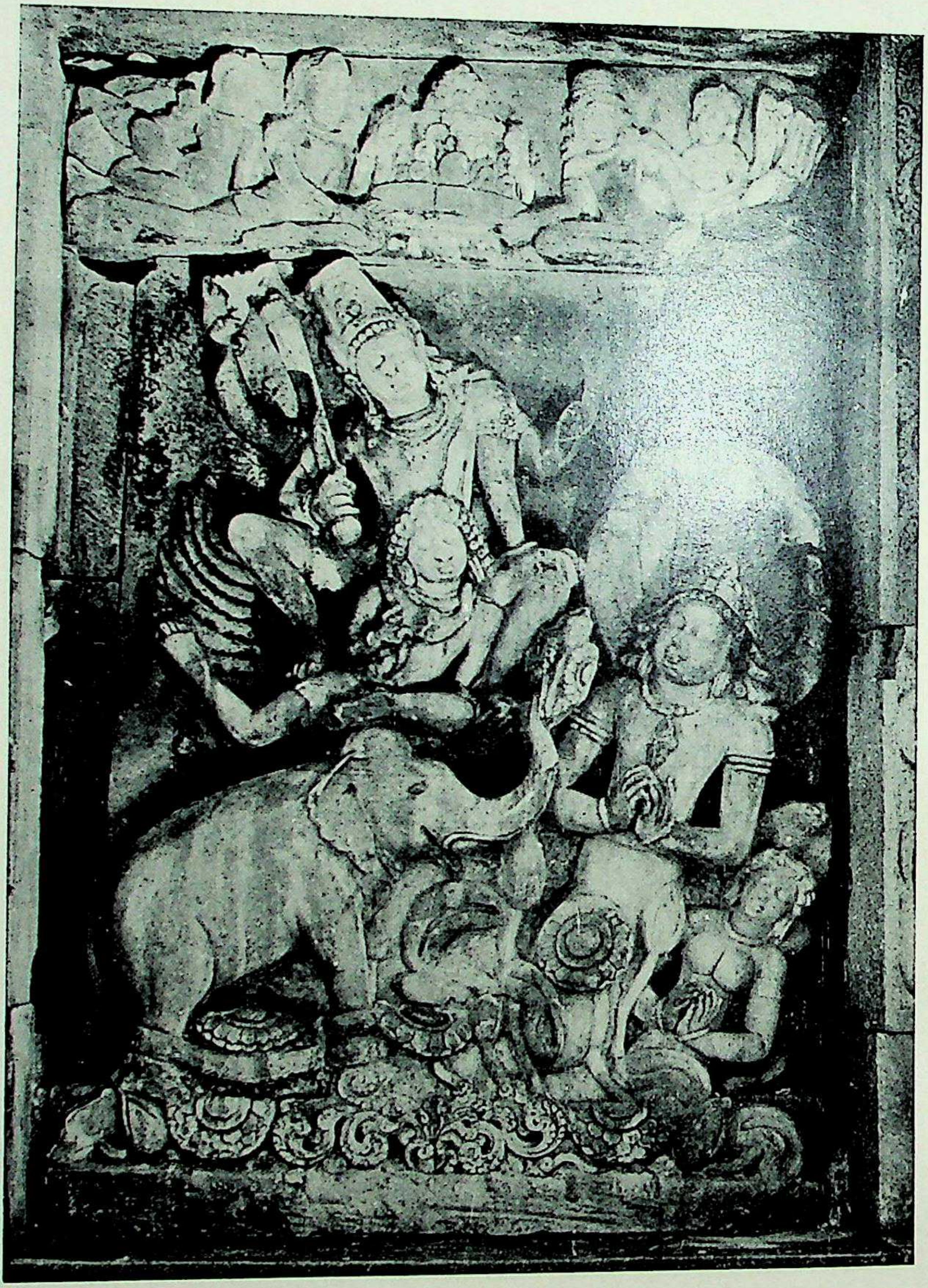
19. Gajasaṁhāramurty, *c.* 8th century A.D., Ellora (Cave 16).



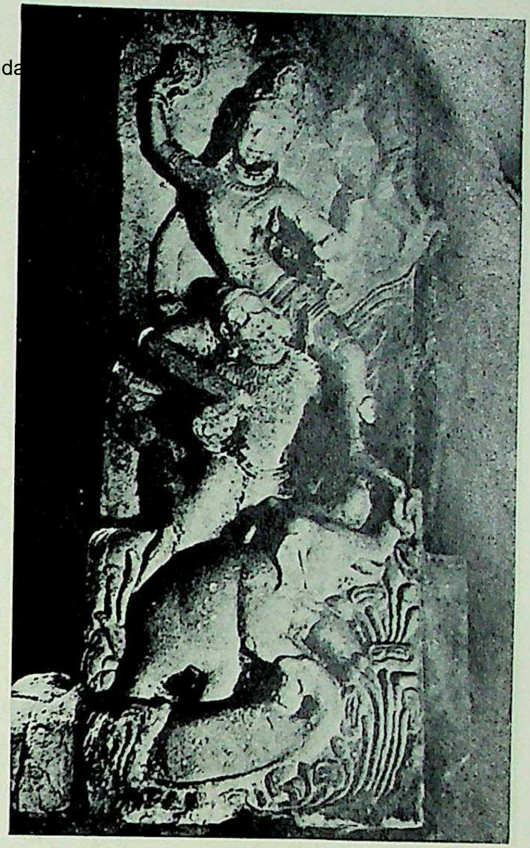
20. Gajasaṁhāramurty (?), *c.* 8th century A.D. Ellora (Cave 14).



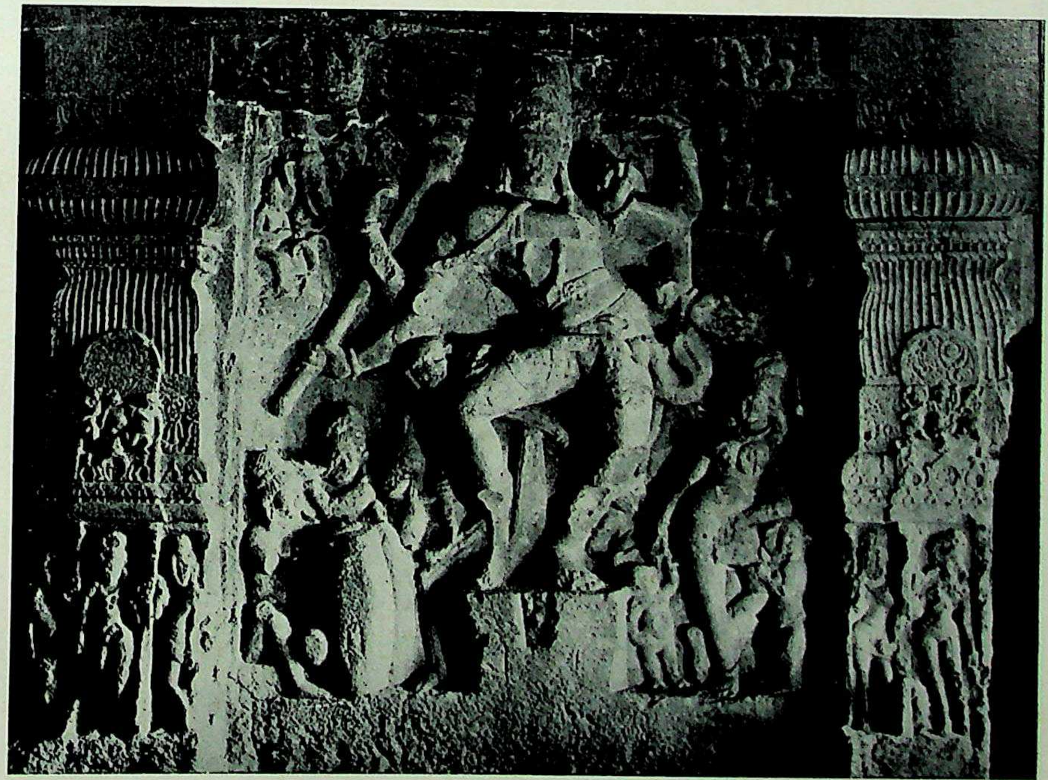
21. Śiva's family, Kangra, early 19th century.



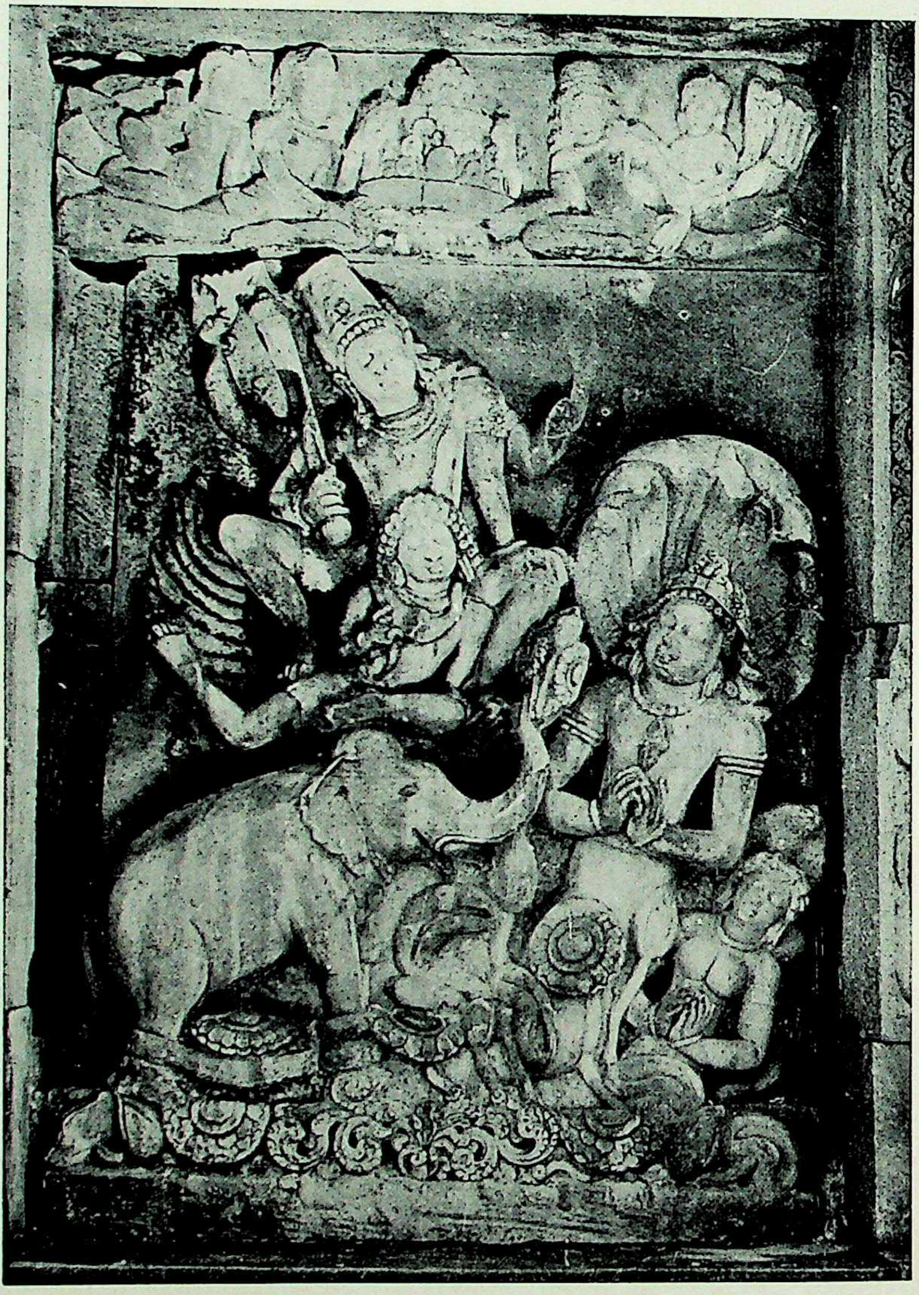
22. Gajendramoksha, Gupta, 5th century A.D., Deogarh, U.P.



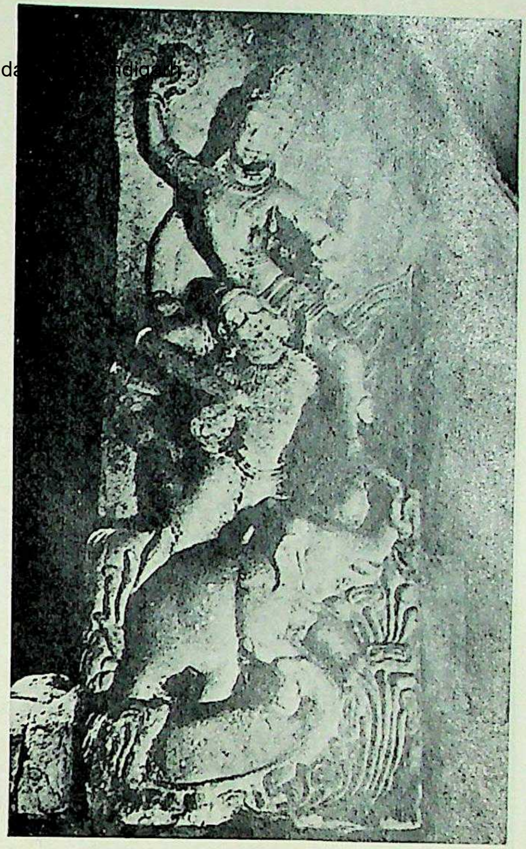
23. Gajendramoksha, *c.* 8th century A.D., Virupaksha Temple, Pattadakal.



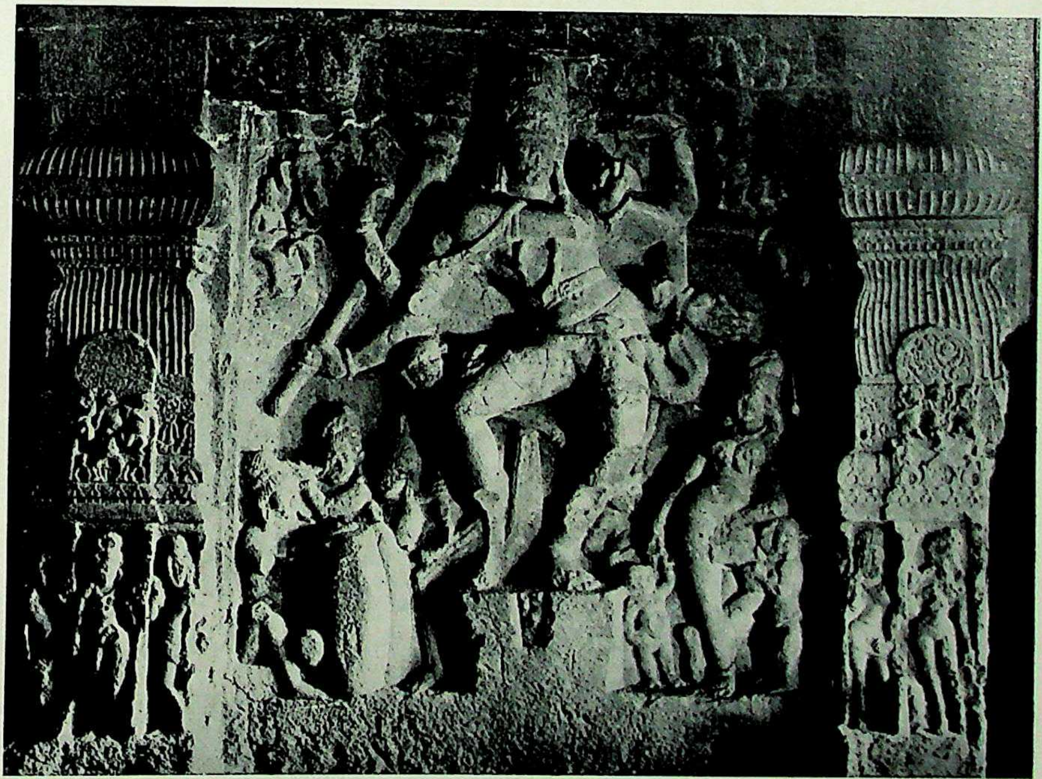
24. Natraja, *c.* 8th century A.D., Ellora (Cave 14).



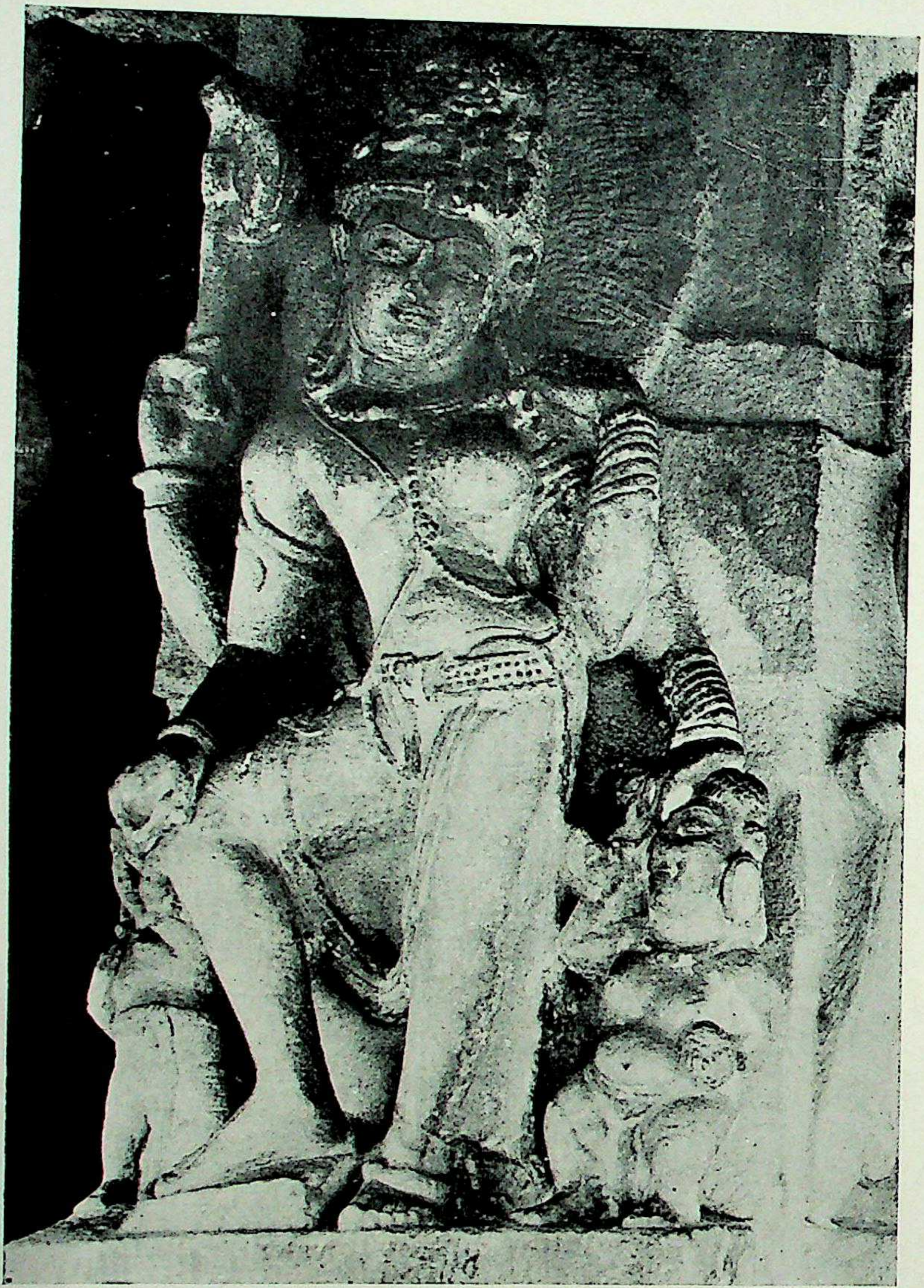
22. Gajendramoksha, Gupta, 5th century A.D., Deogarh, U.P.



23. Gajendramoksha, *c.* 8th century A.D., Virupaksha Temple, Pattadakal.



24. Natraja, *c.* 8th century A.D., Ellora (Cave 14).



25. Ardhanārīśvara, 6th century A.D., Durga Temple, Aihole, Karnataka.

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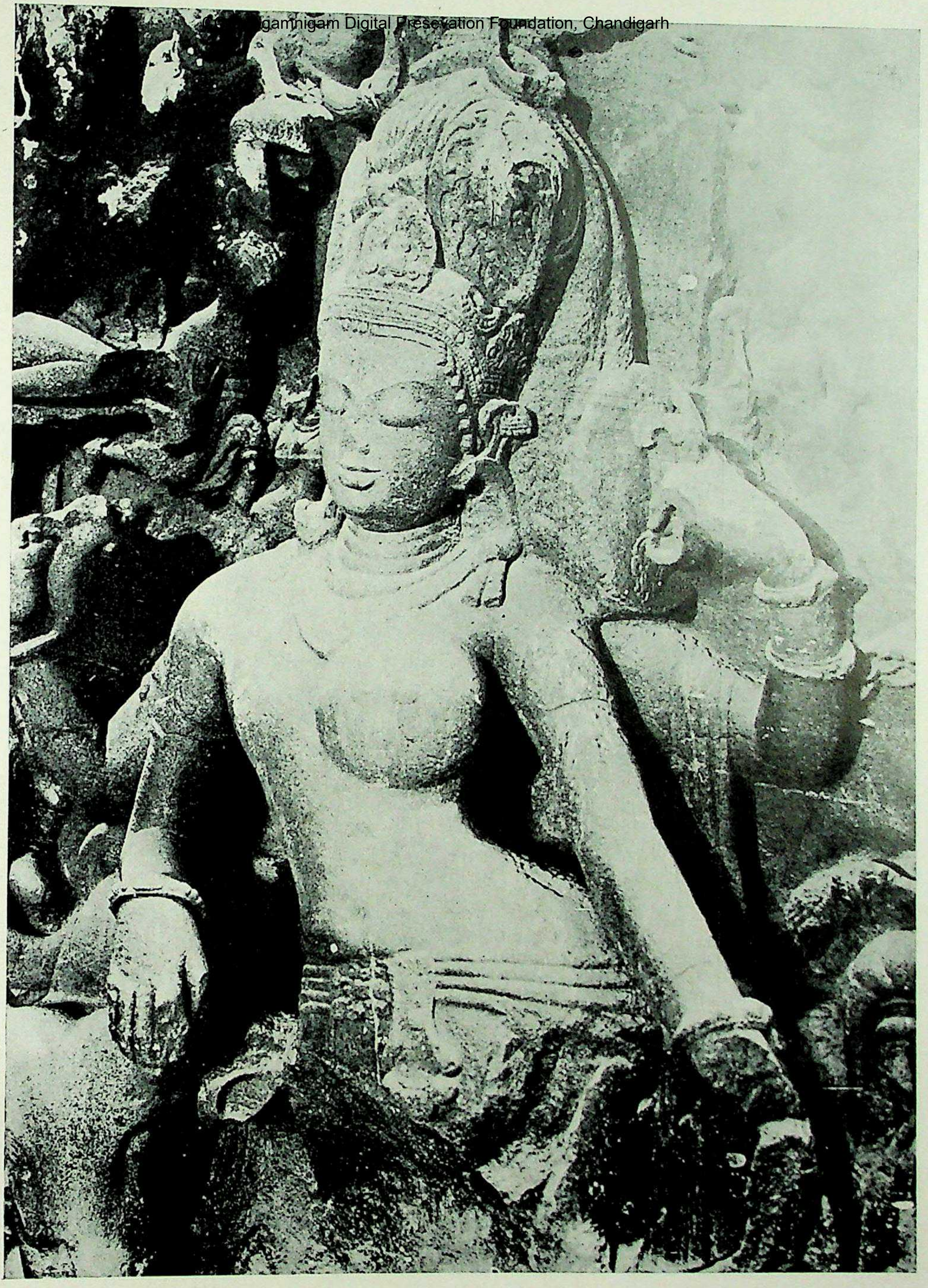
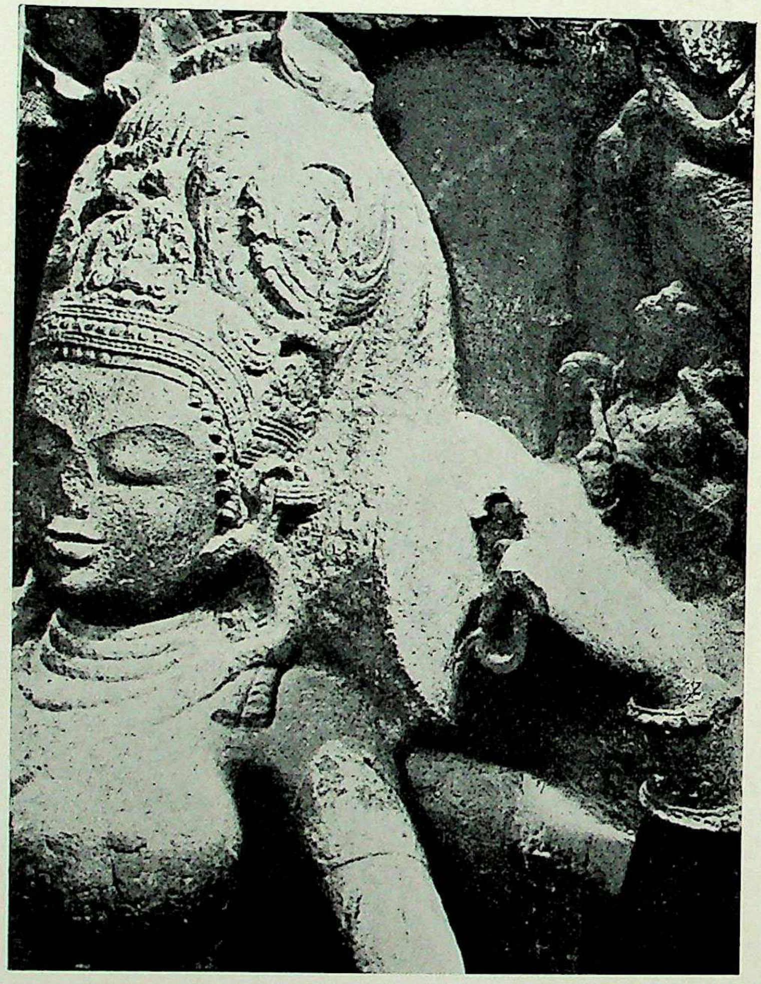
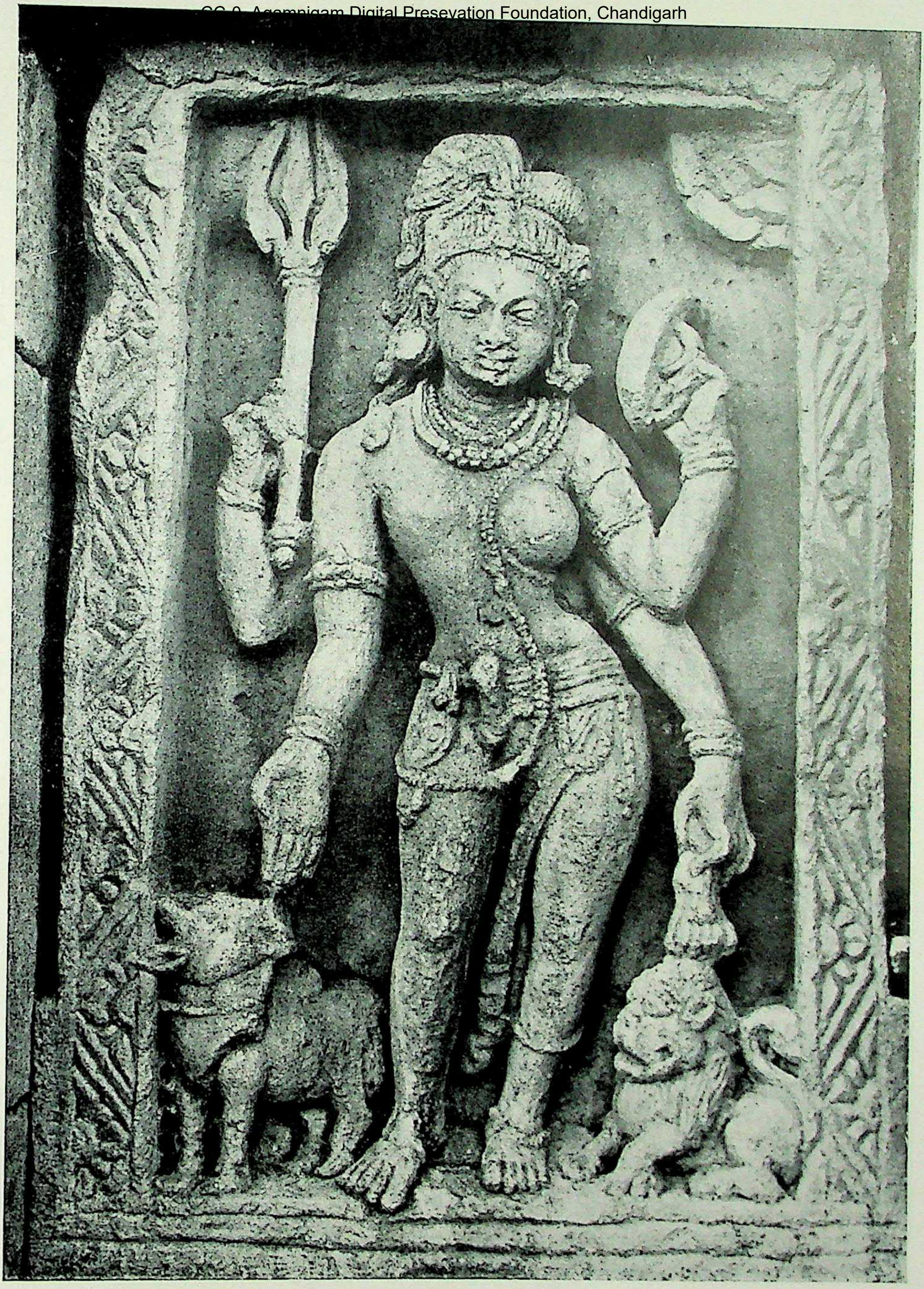


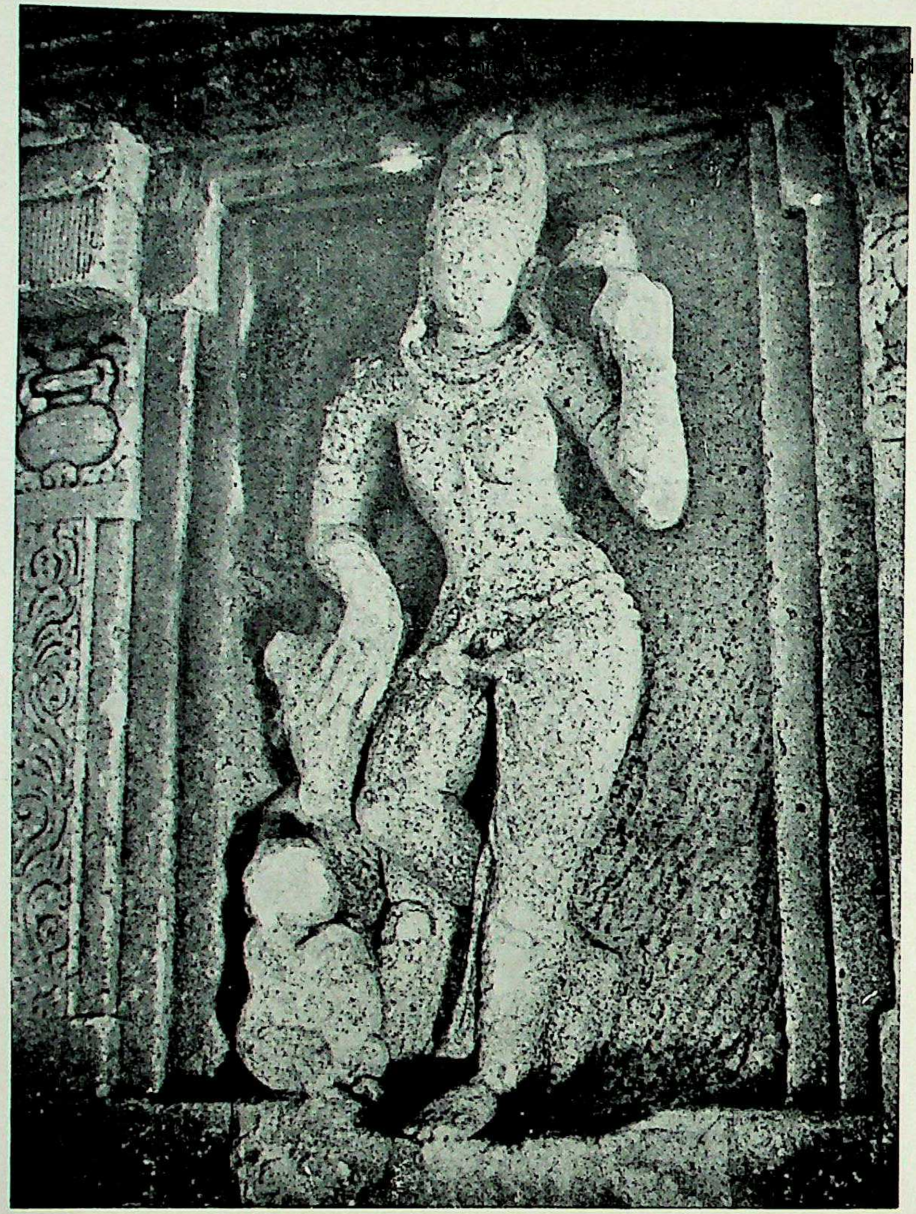
26. Ardhanārīśvara, 6th century A.D., Elephanta.



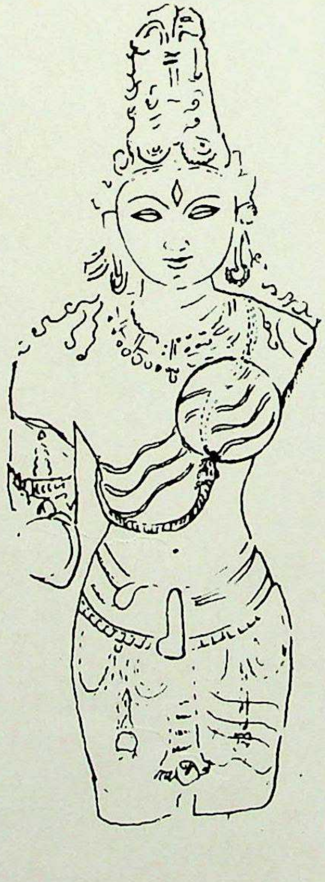
27. Detail of Ardhānārīśvara, 6th century A.D., Elephanta.



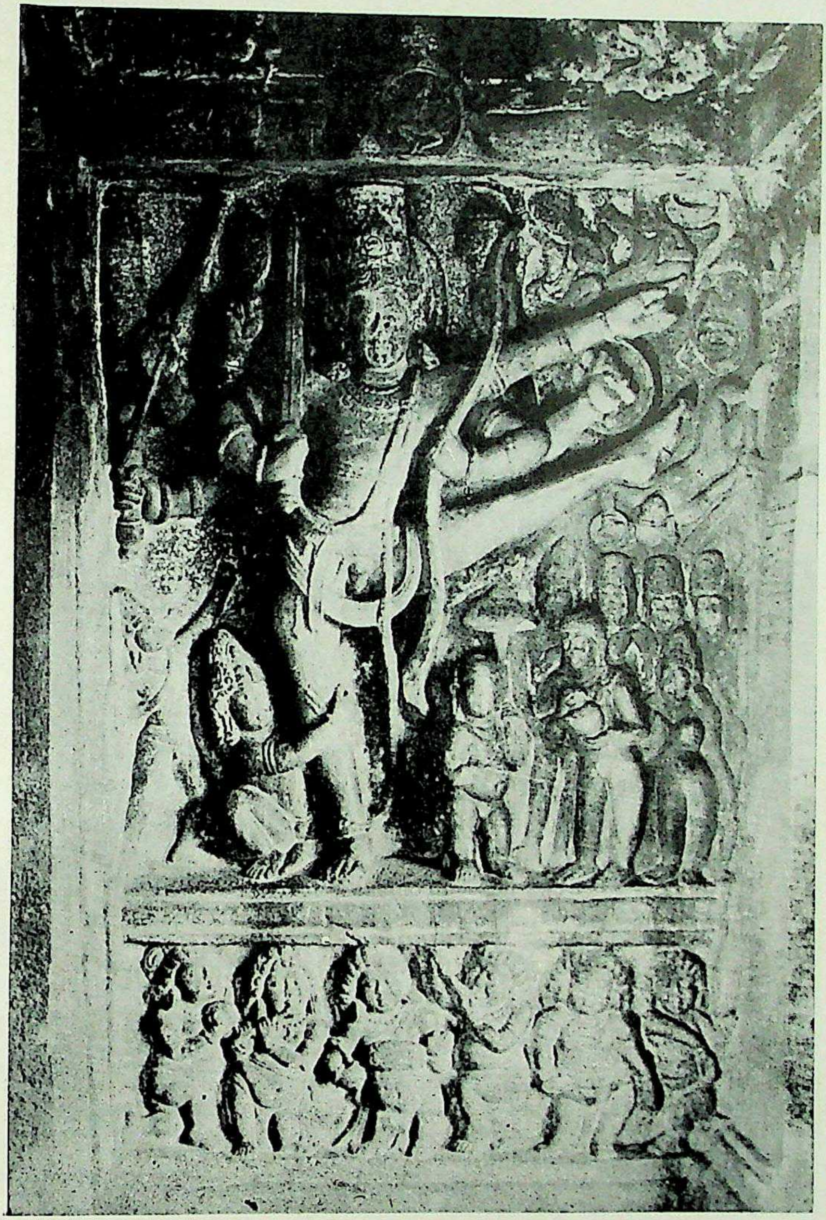
28. Ardhanārīśwara, 10th century A.D., Someśvara Temple, Mukhalingam.



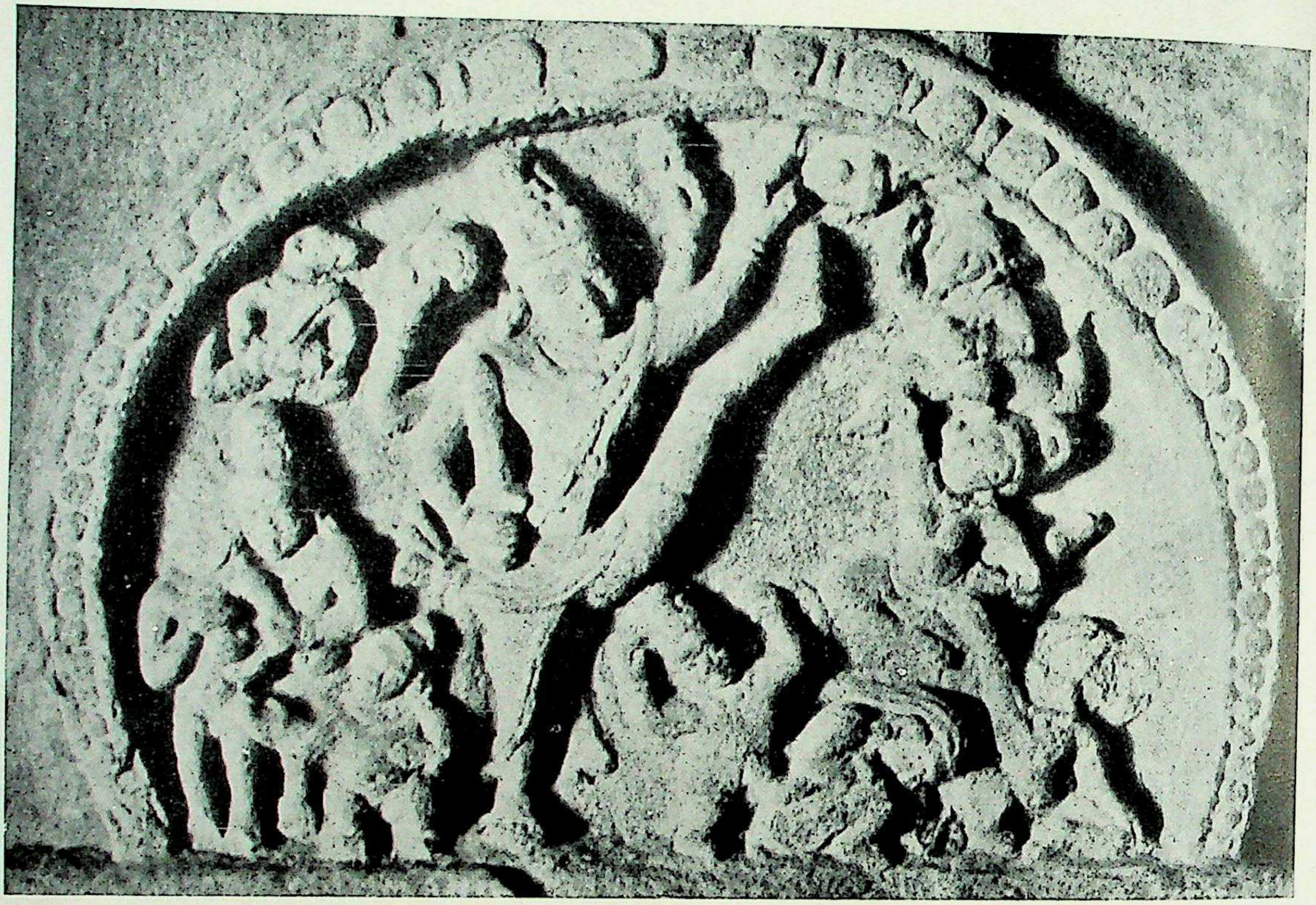
29. Ardhanārīśvara, 8th century A.D., Mallikarjuna Temple, Pattadkal.



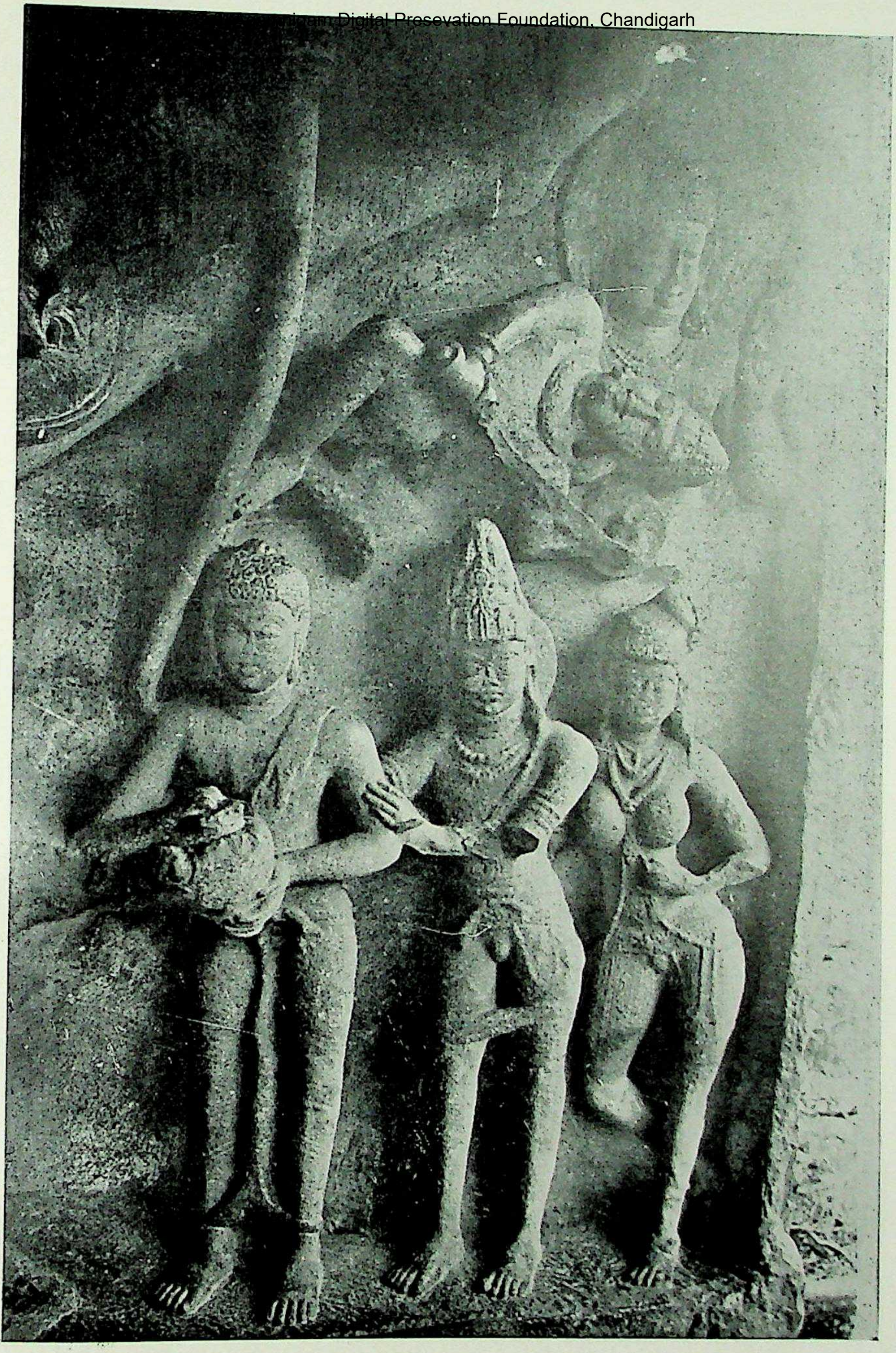
30. Ardhanārisvara Siva, *c.* 12 century A.D.



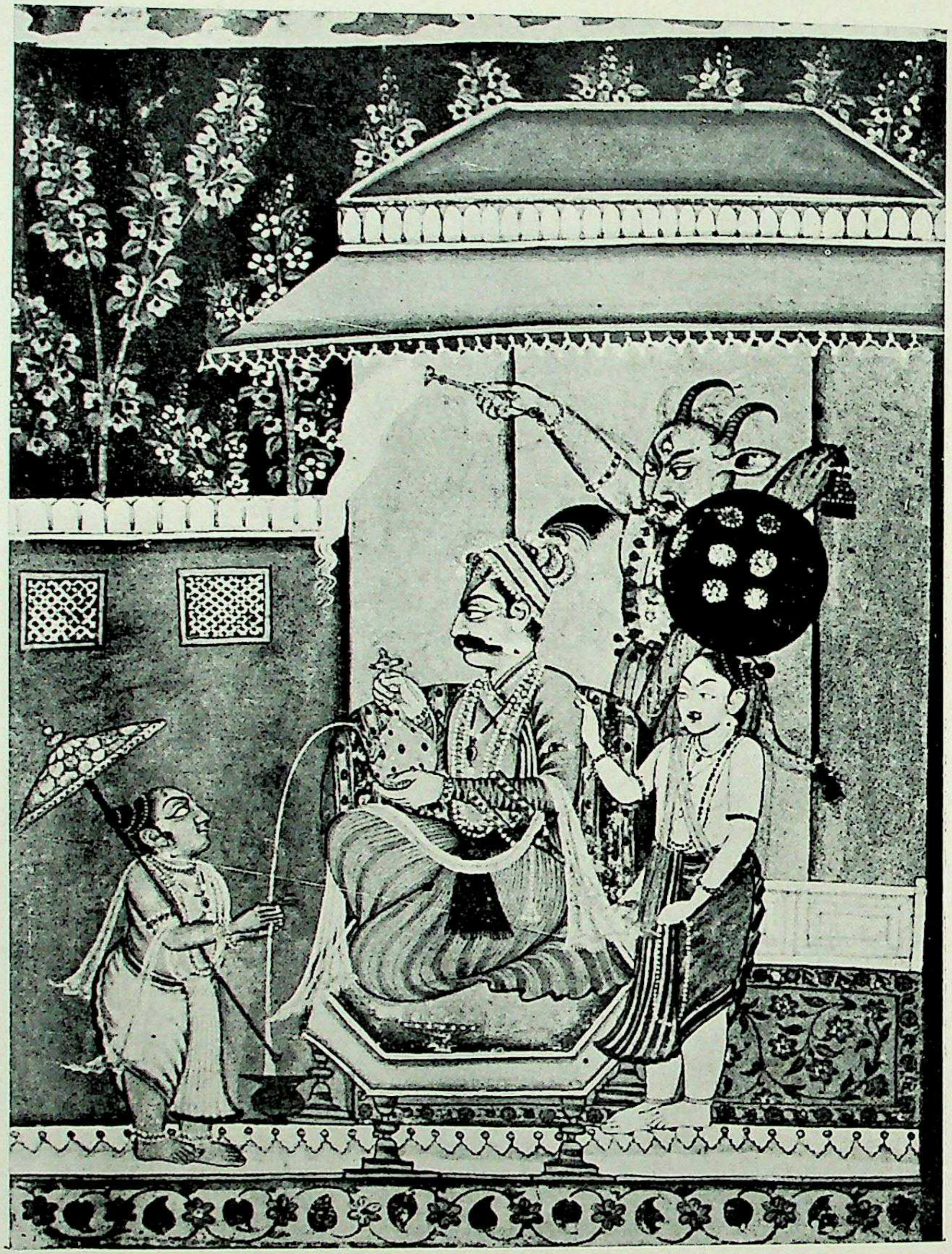
31. Trivikrama Visnu, late 6th century A.D., Badami (Cave 2).



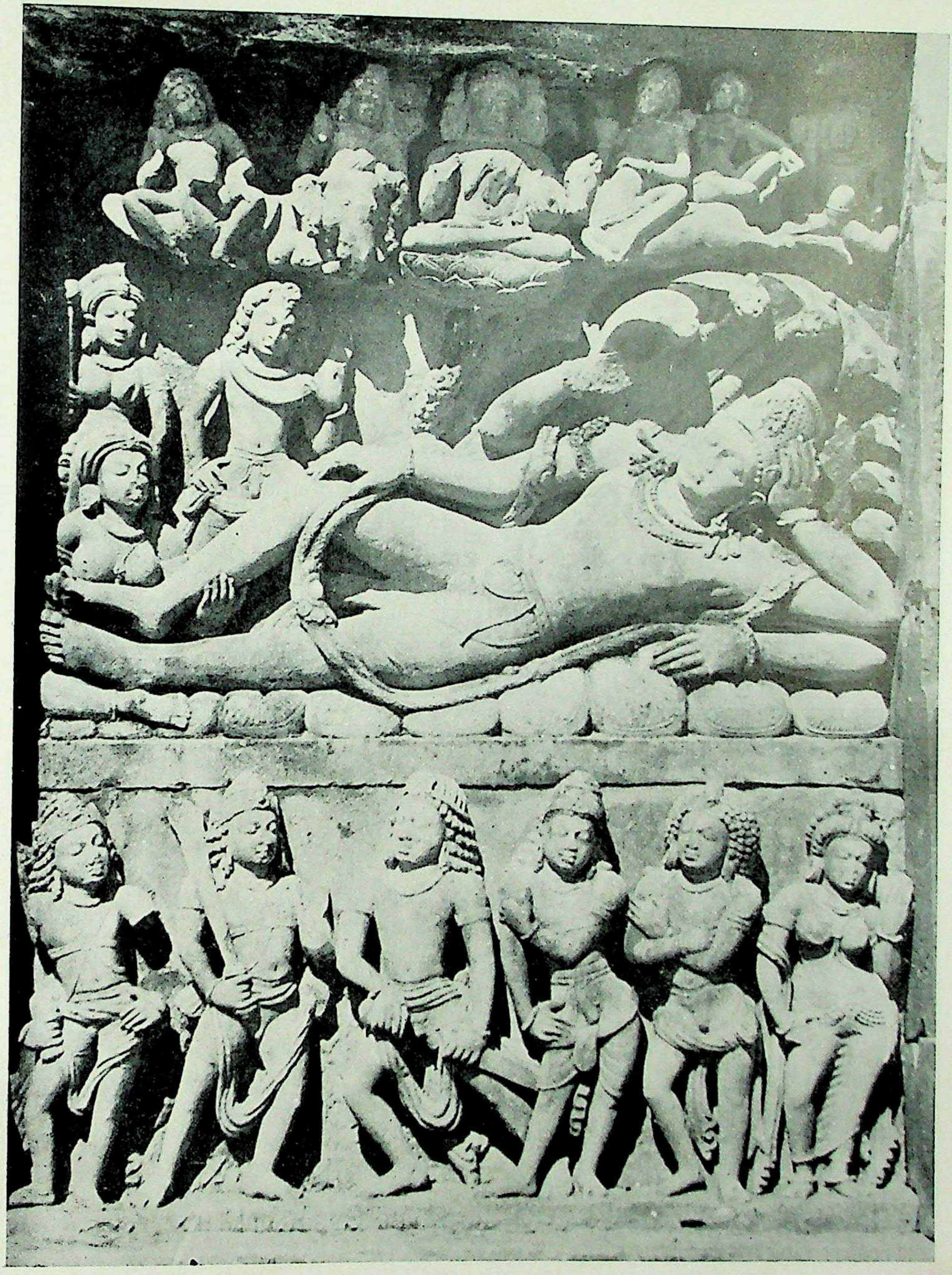
32. Trivikrama, 8th century A.D., Mallikarjuna Temple, Pattadkal.



33. Detail showing scene from the Trivikrama incarnation of Visnu, 8th century A.D., Badami (Cave 3).

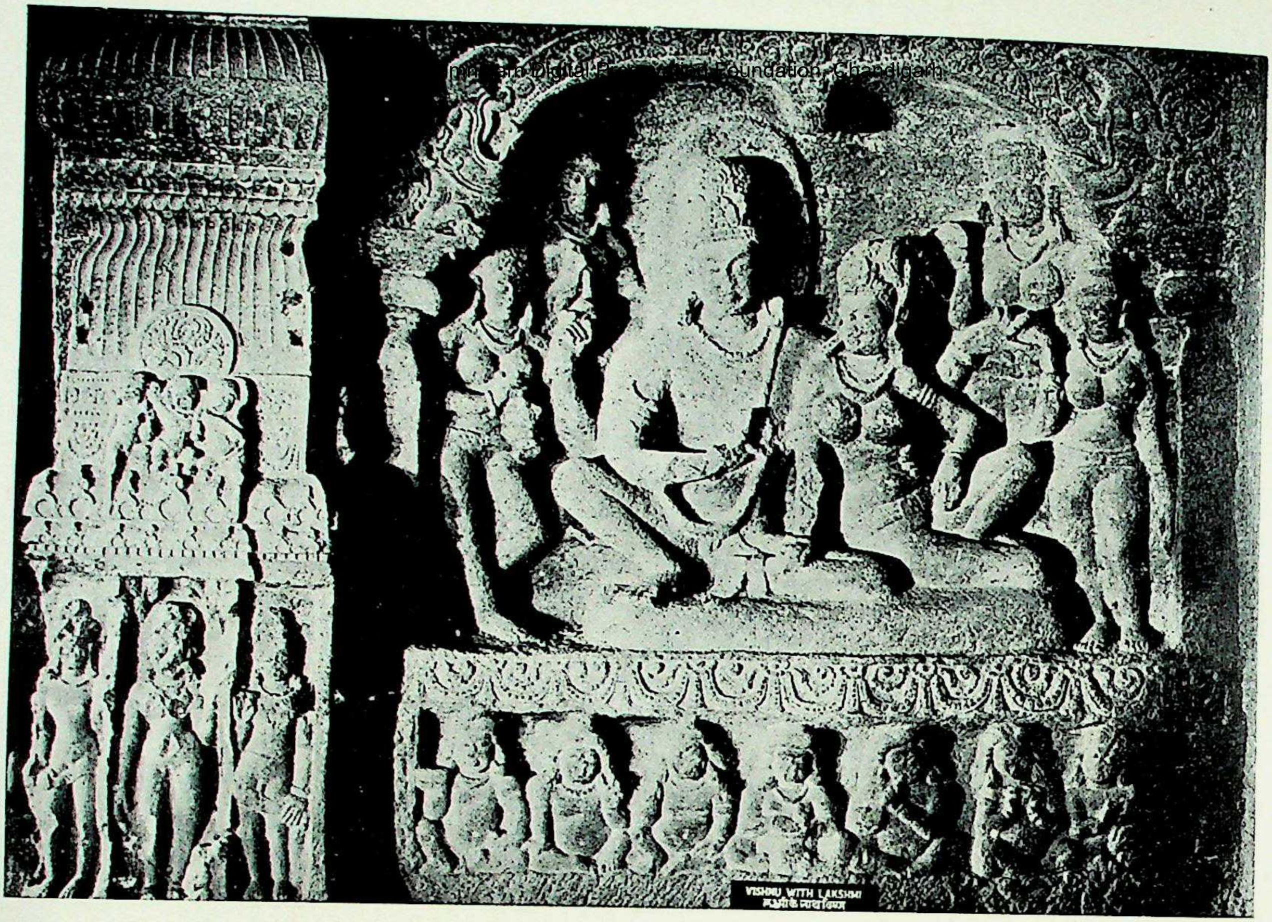


34. Trivikrama receiving homage from King Bali, Basohli style, 18th century A.D., Basohli, H.P., National Museum, New Delhi.

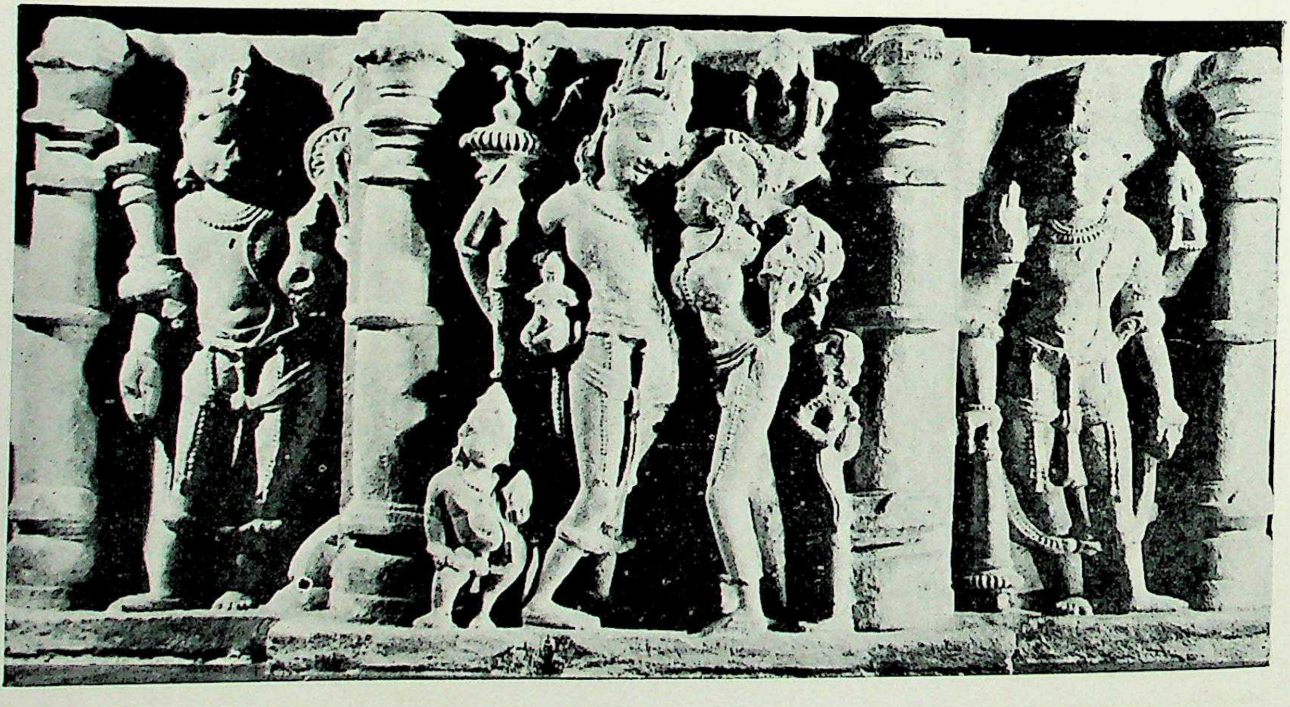


35. Śesāśayi Visnu, Gupta, *c.* 5th century A.D., Deogarh, U.P.

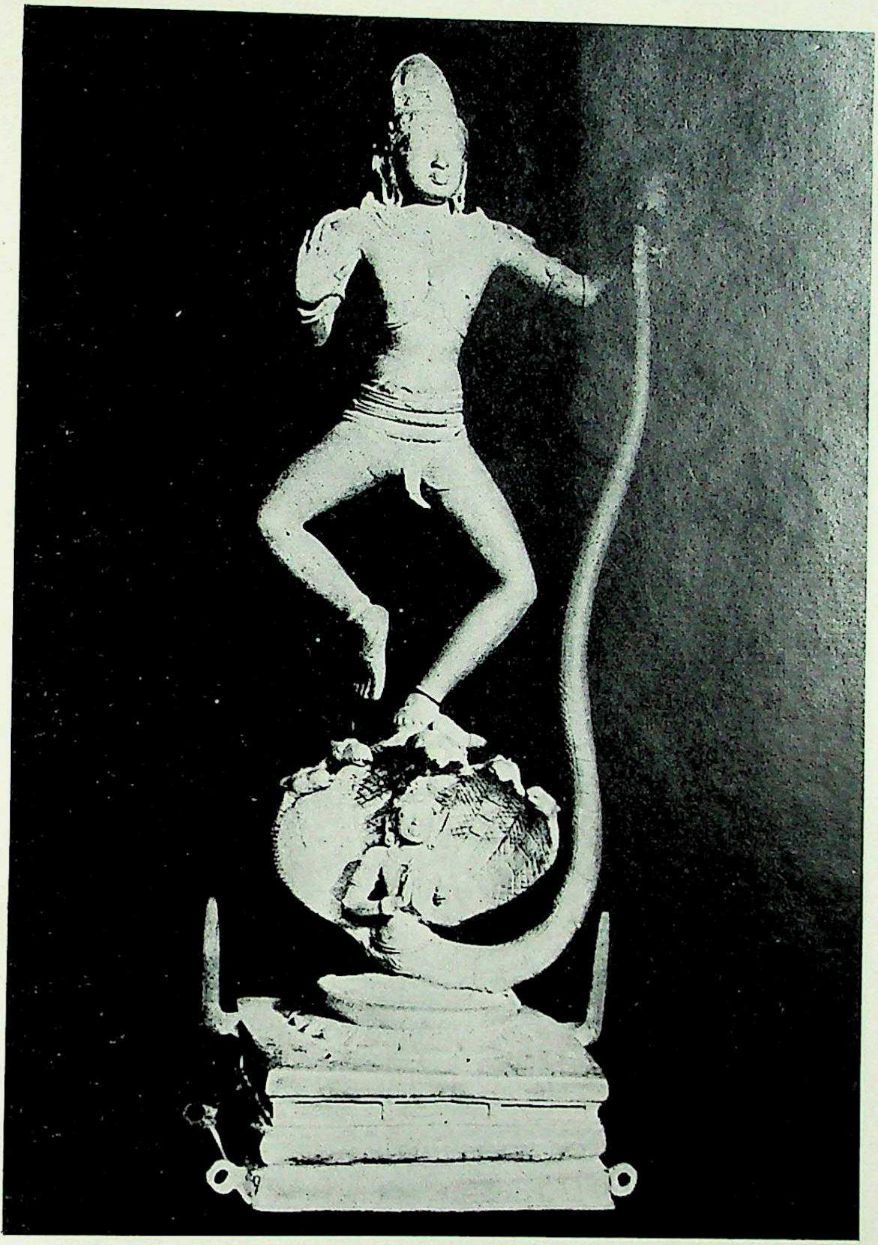
[illegible] Digital Preservation Foundation, Chandigarh


VISHNU WITH LAKSHMI

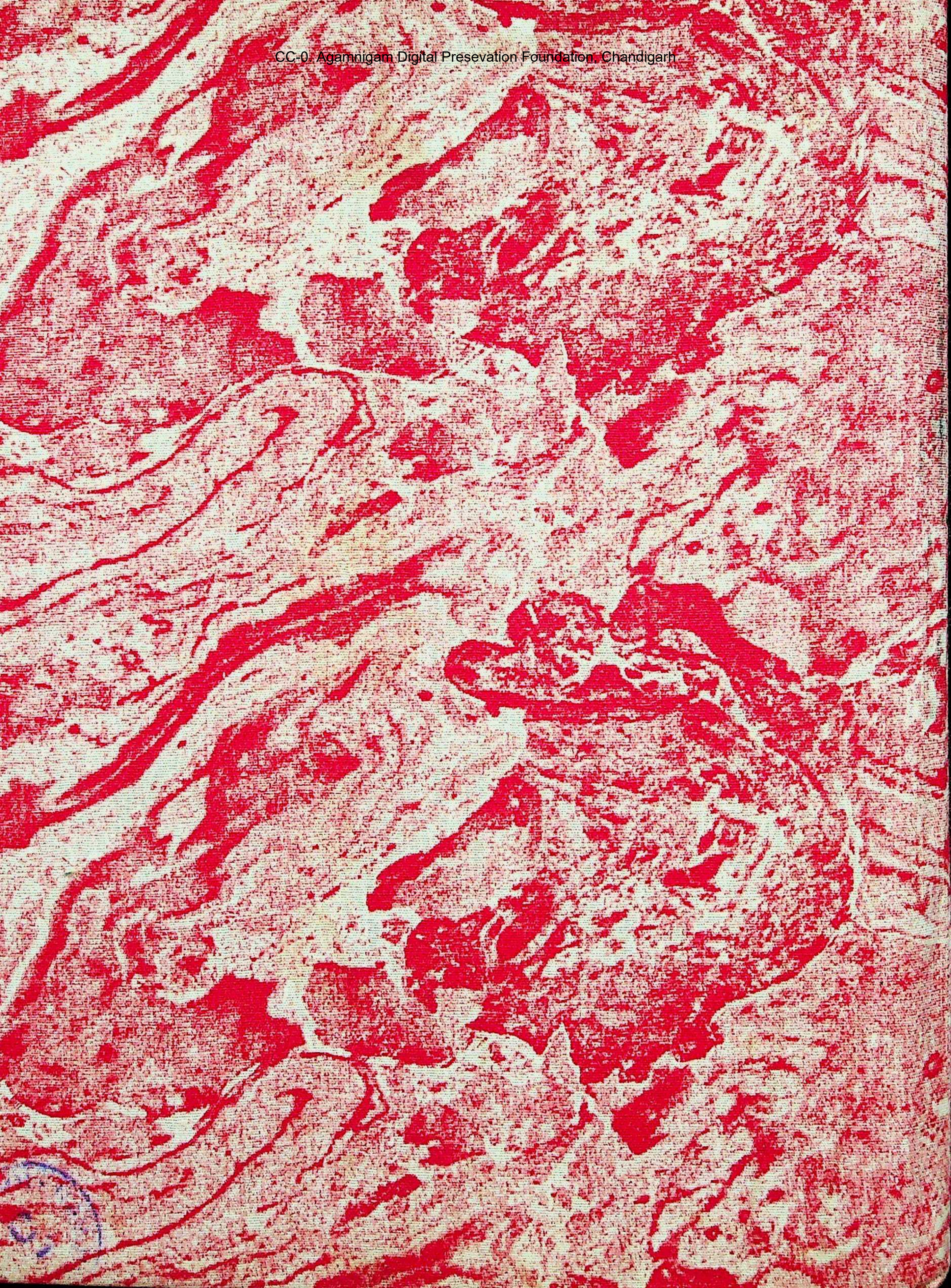
36. Laxmīnārāyana, *c*. 8th century A.D., Ellora (Cave 14).



37. Kalyānsundara Visnu, *c*. 12th century A.D., Manikpur, U.P., Allahabad Museum, Allahabad.



38. Kāliyāmardana, Chola, *c.* 900 A.D., south India, National Museum, New Delhi.



BRONZES FROM ACHUTRAJPUR, ORISSA

by

DEBALA MITRA

Joint Director General

Archaeological Survey of India
New Delhi

Size 29 cm. pp. xii, 185 illust. 142 Rs. 225 $ 45

For the first time, Orissa has been placed firmly in the map of Eastern Indian bronzes. In this pioneering work, *Bronzes from Achutrajpur, Orissa*, Dr. (Mrs) Debala Mitra has shown in clear terms that the eastern tradition of metal images that developed in the eastern region did penetrate also in Orissa.

The hoard of metal antiquities from Achutrajpur (District Puri) constitutes the largest find of its kind in Orissa. It includes ninety-two icons, most of which are of Buddhist affiliation, female figures, metal *stupas* and other objects; all these have been described meticulously, aided by copious illustrations. Textual back-ground of various icons, including some obscure Vajrayana deities, has made the study highly illuminating and useful.

AGAM KALA PRAKASHAN

DELHI